THE FORESTERS.

A NOVEL.

VOL. I.

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THE

FORESTERS.

A NOVEL.

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NOV

THE FORESTERS.

CHAPTER I.

DECLINE OF DAY.

WHAT is that on which depends the happineſs, or the diſtreſs of man's exiſtence? It is our character—it is dependant too in a great meaſure on the manner with which we accuſtom ourſelves to diſcriminate objects:—it is from our ſentiments—from our affections only that we derive our felicity. Do we deſire to poſſeſs it in permanence, let us eſtabliſh it in purity—Do we afterwards complain that we are unfortunate, let us firſt look round, let us compare with our own the lot of other men, and we ſhall have little reaſon for ſelfiſh lamentations. It is by education alone that we are enabled to develope the mind—to arrange the paſſions—to fathom their baſis. The paſſions are a no-

ble, but they are alſo a dangerous endowment; they give to the fire of youth a certain portion of ſtrength, more apt to conſume reaſon than ripen enjoyment: a fire never to be quenched in the heyday of life, hardly in old age to be extinguiſhed. All mankind are more or leſs ſubject to the dominion of the paſſions, and thoſe who know how to regulate, without deſtroying them, are the claſs to whom they will be uſeful; in opulent cities they take their root in luxury, and grow headſtrong for want of pruning—they produce a thouſand fictitious wants—they occaſion a thouſand contrarieties—they create inſatiable appetites, every one of which ſubverts nature, and is the declared foe of legitimate happineſs.

Obſerve a raw youth wrapped up in his own conceit—guided by his own will—with what impetuoſity does he eſcape from the trammels of childhood—with what raſhneſs does he madly run upon the world, tripping or falling at every ſecond ſtep.—See him at the moment when death rids him of a troubleſome preceptor, who would teach him what he has no reliſh for—the leſſons of wiſdom. Does he weep? Does he mourn for his friend?—No! his parents are gone before: this is the only ſtumbling block in the way of his pleaſures: he rejoices that this laſt bar is removed—

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he is ſenſible alone to what he calls his good fortune: but take care, young man, or the liberty thou ſo dearly prizeſt may turn to thy deſtruction. Let us ſtep with him for an inſtant into that world ſo inviting in proſpect—ſo eagerly deſired—a million of temptations, one more brilliant than another, are crowding the path through which he is galloping—they put themſelves into his reach—they invite him to lay hold of them—his joy is confuſed—his choice diſtracted—and at laſt, perhaps, he ſeizes on thoſe by which he is the leaſt captivated, merely becauſe they happen to be the moſt popular—all is noiſe—hurry—diſſipation. Balls, aſſemblies, concerts, horſe-racing, or gaming, occupy the hours as they fly—at night ſtill more new, more charming projects are formed for the morrow—preſent joys fade in their colouring, when oppoſed to the expected future. Our young voluptuary is ever buſy in doing nothing, yet wonders he has the powers of doing ſo much: he has no complaint but the want of time—yet in the progreſs of time, the very recollection of thoſe delights he is now ſo eagerly purſuing are quite obliterated from his fleeting memory, whether it be thoſe of lounging at *ſpectacles*, of deep-play, or illicit love. Love! did I ſay—ah! why profane a name ſo hallowed! Where is the

affinity between inclination and innocent affection—the voice of one is horrible—for ever clamorous to the ſenſes, but does not proceed from the heart—brutal as inſatiable—ſatisfied without choice. Such is inclination—virtuous love is a ray of the Divinity, which the Great Father of all mingles in our mental exiſtence to ſoften our ſorrows, to gladden our hearts, and to draw us nearer to himſelf. But look once more at our poor victim of faſhionable errors—ſee him in the meridian of his career, reduced by diſeaſe to the ſhadow of his former ſelf, the prey of ennué.—Moroſe, peeviſh, devoured by the torments of conſcience, yet aſhamed to repoſe his feelings even in the boſom of his family. Ah! unfortunate, ill-conducted mortal; what a burden art thou become to ſociety—what a weight to thyſelf—what a diſgrace to humanity!

Such as I have deſcribed are the general effects of ſtrong paſſions in great cities: behold the picture contraſted by the quiet inhabitants of the low-roofed hamlet:—examine the peaſants—not ſuch as are to be met with in the environs of Paris:—alas! the contagion of manners has ſpread beyond the Fauxbourgs;—the harmleſs people I mean to repreſent are thoſe of Beauce of Béarn. Obſerve Jacques as he works by the ſide of his father—his age

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is only ſixteen, yet his athletic limbs would perſuade one he had lived over twice that number of years. He follows the plough with the lightneſs of an elf, nor thinks himſelf leſs engaging becauſe his hands grow callous whilſt forcing the ſpade into the boſom of the hardened earth, or that he loſes his reſpectability by employing his ſtout arms in the uſage of the flail—he manfully lays on his ſtrokes on the threſhing floor, rejoicing in the bounty of Nature, who repays his labours with that prolific grain, without which man would find it difficult, if not impoſſible, to ſubſiſt. The burden of the day is over—reſt ſucceeds to labour—he is more than ſatisfied with the proviſion laid up in his barns—the poppy operates on his eyelids, its influence is never impeded, except ſome ſoft retroſpection creeps over his mind, and by the ſweeteſt train of recollections protract his ſlumbers.

Whatever be his pleaſures they are innocent—he recalls the paſſed without occaſion of ſhame—he contemplates the future with delight:—perhaps a party at bowls, a wreſtle on the green, or a dance in the village, bound his deſires—or are theſe ever indulged but at proper ſeaſons:—the hours of enjoyment ſucceed to thoſe of employment—it is only when labour abdicates, that pleaſure begins her reign. His

life is divided into three parts: induſtry has the largeſt, amuſement the ſmalleſt portion; religious exerciſes fill up the remainder; and Jacques, in his pariſh church, is ſtill an object worthy of approbation. It is neither by conſtraint, nor for form ſake, that he goes there, but from habitual devotion—he enters with a modeſt air—he holds up the hat which he carries in his hand to cover his face from obſervation, as he announces ſome ſhort ſcriptural ejaculation, which having performed with due reverence to the preſiding deity, he takes his ſeat by the ſide of his mother: his arms are pendent—his hands joined—his mouth perpendicularly open—his eyes fixed on his meek paſtor, who is dealing out ſublime truths, not in the lofty ſtrains of a declaimer, but the pious, ſimple language of a true Chriſtian, who inſtead of ſtrewing the path of his hearers with flowers of rhetoric, is marking out their direct road to Heaven by the ſtraight way. Jacques loſes not a word of the long diſcourſe—he liſtens—he retains the whole of it—he does more, he makes it the ſubject of his meditation from one Sunday to another.

Theſe two portraits being feebly delineated, I expect there are many who will think I ſpeak too ſeverely of the great, too flatteringly of the ſmall. I diſclaim all partiality—if I am guilty of error, it is the

the error of opinion: neither do I conceive that every character we meet with in cities muſt of neceſſity be vicious, or that all are virtuous which ſhelter themſelves in retirement: but I hope it will be allowed, that inſtances of virtue are more rare in the former, becauſe the latter poſſeſs two grand ſpecifics againſt ennué, work and ſleep. With us idleneſs produces vice—vice is the parent of infirmities—labour ſweetens the poor man's repoſe—it tinges his cheeks with health—it will not let ſickneſs approach, except it creeps upon him in the rear of time—large towns may be conſidered as vaſt overgrown colleges, where we learn to miſuſe our affections, our time, and our paſſions; the only leſſons we readily imbibe teach us that ambition is glory—jealouſy, natural—cunning, cleverneſs. In the country the definition of theſe words are much better underſtood—there Nature is the honeſt ſchooldame, who gives no lectures but thoſe of temperance, virtue, and religion, which her children ſtudy with eaſe, and practiſe with pleaſure.

Where is the man of the world—the freethinker—the man who depends on chance for all the benefits he does, or all the bleſſings he hopes to poſſeſs? Where is this inſenſible, infatuated, ungrateful mortal, who refuſes to own his dependance on

the bounty of Divine Providence? Can he retain his infidelity, when he beholds the enthuſiaſm of ſoul pourtrayed by the humble peaſant as he contemplates in his ſilent evening walk the wonderful works of an All-Sovereign God? Will the man of education, who calls himſelf a philoſopher, convince us that his wiſdom is inferior to the wiſdom of a peaſant?—ſee him returning from a day of toil to enjoy the ſweets of repoſe—though wearied with labour, ſee how often he ſtops to gaze with delight on that horizon which bounds the heart-cheering proſpect of vineyards glowing with purple, fields waving with the ſtalks of plenty; white huts, with ſmoking chimnies peeping out from the embowering trees of verdant-green, ſheltered from the viſitation of ſtorms, too humble to invite the ſpoiler's depredating footſteps—ſee him whilſt he conſiders the charming ſcene, it is the moment of ecſtaſy, it is the moment of exultation—but above all, it is the moment of devout gratitude—his eyes are fixed on the marvellous works of his Creator—he lifts up his heart—his hands are claſped together by irreſiſtible impulſe—his heart beats to the impreſſion of thankfulneſs, and his ſoul is fully ſatisfied.

How happy is this peaſant ſeated on the banks of a rivulet bordered with willows, or fringed about by tall majeſtic trees, forming

forming to his ſight the lengthening view of a clear and liquid avenue, either uniting to embrace each other, or bending their venerable branches to kiſs the flowing, but unruffled water: its ſoft murmurs—the cooling breeze—the paddling oars cutting its ſilver ſurface—the diſtant barking of dogs—the ticktack meaſures of a neighbouring mill, conſpire to captivate his ſenſes, and to fill his mind with religious awe. He watches the going down of the ſun—it ſets in glorious ſplendor—it darts its copious rays on the whole face of Nature—he ſtarts from the calm reverie that envelopes him—he thinks of his family, and haſtens home to embrace them. They meet him on his way—they have loitered behind to collect the utenſils of their work—the ſon paſſes his arm through that of his father—the wife and her children walk before, dragging after them the long ſtraggling branches deſtined to kindle the blazing fire, which is to dreſs their frugal ſupper. Thus they march cheerly along to the ſound of the ſhepherd's bell, as he calls his wandering flock to their nightly fold—the melodious tones of a flute adds ſweet muſical variety to general harmony: the careful mother makes haſte with her roſy brood to prepare for the reception of her huſband—his ſteps are prevented by new objects of admiration.

"See!"

"See!" cries he, "ſee, Jacques, in the obſcurity of this approaching twilight, how glorious to the view is that planet, which ſinking in purple gives place to the ſilver moon, modeſtly waiting to riſe from behind the mountain at the departure of that luminous body, from which her pale light is borrowed."

His feet are now at the door of his cottage—he enters it with delight—he paſſes into his little garden, walks round and round its narrow limits—he is elated with poſſeſſing ten roods of ground ſtocked with vegetables; they are in his imagination equal to ten acres that are not his own: he is contented with his lot—he envies no man—he recalls to his mind the charming ſcene of the evening—is it poſſible to forget ſuch a combination of Nature's beſt treaſures: he meditates, he enjoys, he determines to reviſit them.

Such is the decline of day—remote, far remote from capitals. Ah! how ſtriking the contraſt between the ſilence of the country and the confuſion of cities. Let us ſuppoſe ourſelves half a mile from Paris: what is it that we ſee—what is it that we hear from our elevated ſituation? We overlook a huge maſs of heavy buildings, but we ſee them enveloped in ſmoke, and the ſounds we hear are a diſagreeable compound, unproductive of harmony. Is there

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any thing to be found in the noiſe of carriages—in the trampling of horſes—in the rattling of chains—in the loud voices of thoſe who cry their merchandiſe. What is there in all this to create pleaſure—to make the decline of day glorious or tranquil? You ſigh—you have nothing to approve—nothing to admire—no philoſophic reflections preſent themſelves—you regard with inſipidity, with apathy, the grandeur of thoſe ſuperb edifices, which are miſcalled country houſes—you have prolonged your walk—you have paſſed by many of them—you return to Paris—you are out of ſpirits, fatigued, melancholy—you do not know why—you only know that you are diſſatisfied with your excurſion, and that you have no deſire to repeat it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE WANDERER.

WILLIAM paſſed the gates of Valence alone, and on foot; his little baggage under his arm—his eyes ſwimming in tears—he turns from time to time, examines the ſpires, the edifices of that pretty capital of Valertinois—at every agoniſing look his agitations increaſe—theſe objects remind him of a beloved friend; perhaps too that friend is perfidious—he ſighs—he wrings his hands—he walks on with melancholy ſteps, and ſlow—he no longer perceives the ſummit of the citadel—he loſes ſight of all but his own misfortunes—of theſe he could not be diveſted, they were interwoven with his exiſtence. He is only eighteen: how graceful his figure—how charming his countenance—is it poſſible he ſhould be unfortunate—liſten whilſt I tell you his eventful hiſtory to the moment on which we find him taking the road from Valence—then determine on the colour of his fate.

William is the only name by which I am able to announce him—he knew of no other—he knew not that of his father—neither

neither had his lovely face ever reſted on the boſom of a tender mother: he is alſo as ignorant what place claims his nativity, as of his name, his parents, or his lineage. At the earlieſt dawn of reaſon, in the tender ſeaſon of helpleſs infancy, he found himſelf in the hands of a good old woman, whom inſtinct taught him to call by the appellation of mother; it was not altogether miſapplied—ſhe had given herſelf a title to his duty, his reſpect, and his affections, by rearing with him all the aſſiduous tenderneſs that belong to the maternal character. She loved his perſon, but ſhe did not ſpoil his natural pleaſant diſpoſition by weak indulgences, or ſevere inflictions—he was bred upon her knee before he was able to walk by her ſide; ſhe would then inſpire him with manly ideas, and from her he received the firſt rudiments of education.

William, beſides Madame Dulays who openly protected him, had another benefactor that ſecretly adminiſtered to his wants; from this unknown friend certain ſums were punctually remitted, ſufficiently large for procuring him the means of learning from proper maſters the elements of dancing and muſic. "From the latter of theſe," ſaid his ſenſible monitreſs, "you will reap, my dear William, a great deal of pleaſure when I have orders to ſend you to college, where only you can have a proper

proper opportunity to complete your knowledge in this firſt-rate accompliſhment." William was at this time ten years old; he reſided with his patroneſs at Paris *á porte Cochére*, the ſecond *rue de la Chaiſe*.

Madame Dulays, whoſe huſband had been an officer of cavalry, inherited at the death of her huſband two thouſand crowns, a ſmall competence, yet enough to ſupport the ſtation ſhe choſe to occupy—ſhe cut with the world—ſhe hid herſelf from all ſociety—company were inſupportable—ſolitude charming—ſhe yielded to the unſocial predilection—ſhe neither went abroad, nor received thoſe who ſought to viſit her at home—by what chance the little William became a part of her family is yet a myſtery: let us hope that time may reveal it.

It was not the deceaſe of her huſband—it was not the forlorn ſtate of widowhood that had driven Madame Dulays from the cheerful haunts of men—what made her take up a diſreliſh for ſociety was, the death of an only, a dearly beloved ſon, who was killed in a duel by one of his friends, with whom he quarrelled; which unfortunate diſaſter was ſtill ſo freſh in the mind of his afflicted mother, that almoſt before William was able to comprehend the nature of her complaints, ſhe would

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paſs whole hours in ſpeaking to him on the virtues of her poor Dulays, and the treachery of his friend; ſhe even tried to impreſs his young mind with a bad opinion of mankind in general. She had but this ſingle foible—who then ſhall preſume to hold it unpardonable, though its tendency was pernicious: the child could only liſten without underſtanding—he ſaw her weep—he wept in ſympathy, yet did not know why—he heard her moans—he echoed them back from the very bottom of his heart, equally unempowered to diſcover the cauſe of her afflictions as to conſole her under them; ſo that it may juſtly be ſaid, the firſt leſſons he imbibed from his miſtaken tutoreſs were, that melancholy is full of charms, and that all men are deceitful; in both of which he became tolerably well verſed before he was ſeparated from this dear, but dangerous matron.

At ten years old William was informed by Madame Dulays that ſhe was not his mother. He heard the declaration with grief—with ſurpriſe—with terror—reflecting by nature, gloomy by example, he received the unexpected intelligence with leſs fortitude than ſorrow.

"Ah! if indeed you are not my mother," ſaid he, "what have you done with my parents?—where have you concealed them ſo long?—bring them to me, or carry me

to them. Cruel Mama! why do you tell me I am not your ſon, before you have told me who is the father, who is the mother of your poor little William?"

"That I cannot tell you, my good child," ſhe replied, kiſſing his cheeks, and wiping away the faſt-falling tears which bedewed them; "all I know of your birth is, that the brother of your father was the friend of my huſband; he received you to oblige him; I have aſked him a thouſand times concerning your birth, but if the ſecret was confided to him, he guarded it with care, and preſerved it inviolable."

William every day after this humiliating ecclairciſſement grew more and more thoughtful; he reflected on the words which in former converſations had been more than once repeated by Madame Dulays—*when I ſhall be ordered to ſend you to college.*

"Ah!" ſaid he, "this muſt certainly be my father—who is there beſides that can have a right to diſpoſe of me as he pleaſes."

He eagerly ran to find his benefactreſs, to whom he communicated his ſuſpicions, but ſhe was unable to ſolve or ſtrengthen them: all ſhe could do was to aſſure him that ſhe had never ſeen the perſon who ſupplied her with money to defray the expences of his board, clothes, and education:

tion: it always came to her by ſo particular a mode of conveyance, as left her no opening to gratify her curioſity; though, for his ſake more than her own, ſhe was well inclined to get at the bottom of a tranſaction ſo extraordinary.

"You ſee, my child," added the old woman, in her uſual tone of diſtruſt, "what it is to be forced to live in a world inhabited by men, who make it their buſineſs to deceive us—to impoſe on our ſenſes—Ah! William, William, what bitterneſs ſhall I feel for thee, when thou launcheſt upon this ocean of perfidy! Heaven grant the fate of my poor Dulays may not fall upon thee! it was a friend that pierced his precious boſom—think of him, and as long as you live ſuſpect every man that offers you his friendſhip."

William knew Madame Dulays had ſo much kindneſs for him, that unfortunately every word ſhe uttered found its way to his heart, and at fourteen he was a perfect little miſanthrope; yet nevertheleſs he ardently longed to be preſſed in the arms of his father. "I am chilled with horror," would he ſay, "and miſerable for ever—this myſtery of birth robs me of my only Mama—it gives me no parent to ſupply her place." Such were his cogitations—ſuch his murmuring in the ſolitude of Madame Dulays, who never ſuffered him to

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go out, except to maſs, either in the chapel of the *Petites Maiſons*, or to the church of St. Sulpice, and then only in a coach, for the admittance of which the gates were always opened; ſuch care had the old lady taken that her infant pupil ſhould not be ſeen by ſtrangers, concealing him as effectually from all eyes as if he had been kept locked up in a box.

So much premeditated caution gave a new alarm to the foreboding mind of the too-anxious William, in proportion as his reaſoning faculties daily expanded: he fancied from appearance, which till now had never engaged his attention, that traps were every where ſet to enſnare him; that into ſome of them he ſhould certainly ſtumble, notwithſtanding the prudent precaution of his friend to ſave him; and thoſe erroneous fears rendered him the moſt timid, as he before thought himſelf the moſt miſerable of children.

The day on which his fourteenth year was completed, Madame Dulays ſent for him to her chamber: he found her in a poſition of more than uſual ſadneſs; the neck he had ſo often claſped with duteous fondneſs ſeemed to have loſt its ſtrength, and to bend in deſpair over her claſped hands which reſted on a table. Thoſe cheeks his infant lips had ſo often covered with kiſſes, were now deluged in tears;

and

and the boſom on which his early cries were huſhed, heaved with ſighs. In theſe terrible ſymptoms William prejudged ſome frightful diſaſter that threatened himſelf—pale and trembling he fell on his knees: he hid his face in her robe, and reſpectfully urged her to tell him with what ſort of danger he was threatened.

"With the greateſt that can be," ſhe replied. "Ah! dear child! thou art going to be caſt upon the wicked world—yes, thou muſt go to college—the time is come: alas! we muſt ſeparate—we muſt part—alas! dear William! perhaps for ever."

"God forbid! God forbid!" exclaimed William, preſſing her ſhrivelled hands to his lips, and weeping over them; "if they force me from you I will return often to ſee you—I will never diſgrace the precepts of virtue you have taught me—I will hate the world—I will hate every body in it, except I am ſo fortunate to find my father and my mother; them I will love with the ſame affection as I love you my dear, my only Mama, ſo do not cry any more, for when I am a man you ſhall live with me, or I will come back and live with you."—The old woman embraced him with rapture.

"I am a fool," ſaid ſhe, "to let you ſee how much I am afflicted, becauſe I break your heart without eaſing my own.

Well,

Well, well, you will be a good boy—I know you will—therefore let us try to forget our vexation. If it pleaſe Heaven, all that grieves me now may be for the beſt: who knows but in time it may be your fate to fill ſome high ſphere, where you would find yourſelf very deficient, with no better education than I can procure for you. Yes, it is quite right that you ſhould go to this dreaded college, where, if you attach yourſelf to ſtudy, and avoid bad examples, you may learn a great deal, and do yourſelf no harm."

"But who is it that ſeparates me from you?" ſaid William, "by what authority—for what purpoſe—tell me all that you know, my dear Mama, and I ſhall accede with the better grace to my deſtiny."

"My amiable child!" replied Madame Dulays, who by this time was reſtored to compoſure, "it is the unknown gentleman to whom you are already very much indebted, who ſignifies by a mighty reſpectable perſon, calling himſelf Dumount, that his commands are, you ſhould on this very day remove with him to college. Monſieur Dumount comes to fetch you away—it was his preſence, or rather the errand that brought him hither, which flung me into the condition you found me expoſed to—it is therefore our duty to ſubmit: but

but in the new abode to which you are going, always remember the leſſons of prudence—of caution—and of temperance you have ſo aptly imbibed: above all, I charge you form no friendly ties with your comrades; my poor Dulays fell by the hand of a college friend. Think of that, and conduct yourſelf with more wiſdom than he did." Her tears at the mention of her ſon began to flow afreſh, but the current of them was ſoon ſtopped by the majeſtic figure of an eccleſiaſtic, who with a ſober pace, and grave air, preſented himſelf before them.

It was the Abbé Dumount. His perſon was tall, well made, and erect, though age had turned the colour of his hair to a ſilver gray—his countenance pale, his eyes penetrating, and full of brightneſs—his ſmile ſweet, complacent, but tinctured with reſerve—the caſt of his features indicated probity, candour, and frankneſs; characters which very much relieved the fears of William at the ſtranger's entrance, and inſpired him not only with courage, but even with ſomething like a firſt-ſight affection.

"Behold," ſaid Madame Dulays, preſenting her pupil to the Abbé; "behold, Monſieur, my poor little friend, whom I cannot feel pleaſure in reſigning, even to you,

you, though I well know how much the exchange will be to his advantage."

"Your regret, Madame, is extremely natural," replied Dumount; then preſenting his hand to William, who received it with a good grace, he added, "I do not promiſe to love you better than Madame Dulays, but I will try to love you as well; and if my black dreſs does not throw a little reſtraint over your good will towards me, I ſhall ſoon be more the confidant of your thoughts, than the preceptor of your conduct."

"And will you indeed, Sir," cried William, with a degree of vivacity unuſual to him, "will you have the goodneſs to be yourſelf my preceptor. Ah! Mama, if I am only to learn of this gentleman, I ſhall be leſs unhappy when I leave you than I ſhould be with any body elſe in the world."

The Abbé was ſenſibly affected by a preference not leſs flattering for the dreſs of ſimplicity in which it was offered.

"Yes," replied he, ſtretching out his arms, and tenderly preſſing him between them, "yes my dear boy, I will be your tutor—I will be your friend—I will be your father, till he to whom you belong ſhall think proper to reveal himſelf."

William ſobbed out his thanks.

"God

"God be praiſed," cried the old woman, "that you are ſo tender hearted, Monſieur, you ſee how ſuſceptible are the affections of this charming child—you ſee how he grieves at leaving me."

"He is in the right, Madame," kindly replied the Abbé, "where gratitude does not ſpring up at an early ſeaſon in the human mind, the ſoil would be moſt unpromiſing; I ſhould be far from deſirous of undertaking to cultivate what Nature has left ſo barren: but you muſt viſit us—you muſt come often to ſee us—we ſhall receive you as the reward of our diligent application in the purſuit of our ſtudies—at preſent it is convenient that we ſhould ſeparate: I entreat your adieus may be ſhort, to protract them is the worſt policy in the world." Saying this he led his pupil to the embrace of Madame Dulays; he threw himſelf into her arms, ſhe preſſed him to her boſom; both were diſſolved in tears, but neither of them uttered a word: at laſt they ſeparated in ſilence—it was a ſilence full of tender expreſſion, and did not offend the Abbé.

Having entered a carriage which waited for them at the gate, William obſerved a ſervant he had never ſeen before, who ſtood at the ſide of it, opened the door, buſied himſelf in placing his baggage on the outſide; and after all this was done,

mounted behind it. Monſieur Dumount plainly ſaw that it was only the modeſty of his pupil which prevented him from aſking queſtions concerning this man, who ſeemed to engage a good deal of his attention, and willing to amuſe him by ſatisfying his curioſity, informed him, the ſervant who attended them would always continue in his ſervice, if he ſhould approve of him on a longer trial, being hired to live with, and wait upon them in the college to which they were going. William felt a touch of momentary vanity at this firſt ſtep towards his increaſing conſequence: the coachman drove rapidly through the *rue de la Chaiſe*, and ſoon brought them to the *Montagne Ite Geneviéve*, where they alighted at the great gate belonging to the college of *Navarre*. Monſieur Dumont taking his pupil by the hand, entered with him thro' a grated door, which was ſuddenly ſhut upon them. William trembled—his heart palpitated—his knees could ſcarcely ſupport him at appearances ſo tremendous, but the good Abbé ſqueezing his hand and bidding him fear nothing, he revived a little; yet before he had proceeded very far all his terrors returned with even greater force than at their firſt attack; he was taken ſo extremely ill from the mere agitation of his ſpirits, that Monſieur Dumount, aſſiſted by ſervants, were forced to carry

carry him between them into the apartment of the principal, where he ſtrove with his diſorder, of which he felt aſhamed, but found his ſituation not at all mended by being in the preſence of a maſter, whoſe long black robes, auſtere features, and crabbed countenance, were enough to have intimidated a more robuſt youth than himſelf. In a puritanical, whining tone, the ghoſtly pettant obſerved, that thus it was with all children. "When firſt they come here," ſaid he, "they diſlike the idea of work, becauſe they have been ſpoiled by their parents at home, but when accuſtomed to ſtudy, they ſoon get rid of their lazy habits, and commence men." Then looking with ſomething which he meant ſhould reſemble kindneſs towards the meek and intereſting William, he aſked him "if he was any thing better;" adding "I aſſure you, my little friend, it is nothing; believe me it is nothing: to-day you ſhall make me your bows—that boy is extremely pretty—do you hear, child—do you not admire my goodneſs?—I ſay to-day I expect no taſk from you—but to-morrow mind you are to work—yes, you muſt be diligent to-morrow—will you not, my little man, be very diligent to-morrow—diligence is a mighty bleſſing; I aſſure my good child, it is a very mighty bleſſing indeed."

"Ah!" thought William, as he liſtened to this college wiſdom, which ſtruck hard on the boundaries of nonſenſe: "ah! I am brought here as a lamb to the ſlaughter; what would become of me, but for the good Mr. Dumount? how unlike is he in all reſpects to this babbler, who looks cruel even whilſt he is ſpeaking kindly. He ſoon ſaw theſe two gentlemen who occupied his reflections go out together; three Abbés remained behind; their figures were far from prepoſſeſſing, and the many croſs queſtions they put to William very much diſconcerted him—he thought of his good old woman, haſtily wiſhing himſelf again reſtored to her protection: whilſt under examination his anſwers were ſo ſhort, ſo confuſed, that riſing to retire at a ſmall diſtance where they might ſpeak apart, he heard one of them ſay to the other, "That child is a fool; look at the air of folly that envelopes him."—"You are miſtaken," he replied, "the boy is no fool; that you take for folly is only timidity."—"Heaven defend me from *ſuch* timidity!" returned the firſt ſpeaker; "I fear we ſhall have much trouble in teaching ſo ſtupid a blockhead—no, no, we ſhall never bring him about."

Here they were interrupted; Monſieur Dumount returned with the principal, who conducted William and his private preceptor

ceptor to an apartment commodious enough, which he told them was to be theirs: as he went out he tapped the affrighted boy on his cheek, bidding him be very good, very wiſe, and to think nothing about it—a favourite expreſſion with the pedagogue on all occaſions. William ſaw him depart with what might have been called pleaſure, had it not proceeded from the ſource of melancholy, for when no longer reſtrained by the awful preſence of his maſter, he gave way, without control, to the grief that oppreſſed him, which his miniſtering angel of peace, the good Dumount, endeavoured to mitigate; he heard him with gratitude, but he heard him alſo with deſpair: ſuch were the firſt effects of petticoat government—he could think of nothing but his old woman, by whoſe indulgences he was not the better fitted for ſchool diſcipline. When dinner was ſet before him he could eat nothing, but remained the whole day overwhelmed in ſorrow.

The next morning he did not feel leſs uncomfortable; when Monſieur Dumount, with a great deal of form, put him under the care of the maſters appointed to give him his leſſons, he hardly underſtood what they ſaid to him; however, he ſhewed no reluctance to do as they ordered him—in the afternoon Madame Dulays came to

viſit him; ſhe heard his complaints with that falſe tenderneſs, which increaſed, rather than ſilenced them. His ſenſible friend the Abbé calling her aſide, gently reprehended her improper method of conſoling his pupil; ſhe confeſſed herſelf to have done wrong, and before ſhe took leave of William ſhe exhorted him to take courage; begging him, with tears in her eyes, to adopt that firmneſs of mind ſo neceſſary to make his new mode of life eaſy to him. Theſe few words made a greater impreſſion on his diſſatisfied mind, than all that had been ſaid to him ſince he entered the college, and after ſhe was gone he went quickly to his ſtudies; from this time he alſo began to recover his very ſmall ſtock of cheerfulneſs, which had entirely deſerted him on being placed in the hands of ſtrange people.

Monſieur Dumount, though the beſt of all poſſible beings, and gentle as mercy to his infant charge, was notwithſtanding the worſt companion that could have been given him, becauſe he did not love the world, or human ſociety, one bit better than his pupil: alas! their characters, their ſentiments, too well accorded, ſo that we muſt not expect to ſee William the leſs a miſanthrope for the inſtructions of his otherwiſe faultleſs tutor.

Theſe

Theſe two friends lived together in cordial habits of love and eſteem for many months, and Madame Dulays repeated her viſits, nor was denied admittance, as after the firſt ſhe took care that her culpable ſoftneſs ſhould no more offend: on the contrary, ſhe aſſiſted to the increaſe of his application. William ſincerely loved, but William greatly feared the Abbé Dumount; he longed to aſk him about his father, but many months were elapſed before he could ſummon reſolution enough to aſk him a ſingle queſtion on the ſubject; at laſt taking courage, he ſaid to him, "My dear Sir, I dare ſay it is in your power to give me a great deal of happineſs, if you are inclined to do it."

"Speak on my child, and do not fear my inclination—what is it you would have of me?"

"I long to know my birth—I think, I believe, I am pretty ſure that you can tell me who is my father."

"William, I do not know your father, I am as ignorant of him as you are."

"Ah! Sir, but how then did you happen to hear of the poor deſerted boy, to whom you are ſo good, ſo kind?" He wept as he ſpoke.

"Dear child, do not weep—I will tell you every thing that I do know. I had often," continued he, "met at the houſe

of a lady, who is an acquaintance of mine, a well-looking man, of middle age; he appeared to take a warm intereſt in whatever concerned me; my friend received him on the buſineſs of another, and did not even know his name; he one day aſked me if I would undertake to aſſiſt in the education of a young perſon, the ſon of his friend; I agreed to his propoſal with pleaſure, for I love to cultivate the human mind before it is adulterated by the vices of the world—this gentleman then named to me the college of Navarre, as that fixed upon for the purſuit of your ſtudies; he informed me where I ſhould find you, on what day I ſhould take you from Madame Dulays; he alſo gave me a purſe of twenty-five louis, telling me he would take on himſelf to be anſwerable for our penſion."

"Well, but my dear maſter," cried William, eagerly interrupting him, "is it not poſſible, do you think, that this bountiful ſtranger ſhould be my very father himſelf?"

"Indeed, my poor child, your queſtion is very natural; nor do I by any means think it improbable, that your innocent conjecture ſhould be founded in fact; you put me in mind too that your features bear a very ſtrong reſemblance to his—I ſhall make it my buſineſs to ſee this lady again; perhaps by this time ſhe might be able to inform

inform me of his name and quality." Dumount was as good as his word; but as ill luck would have it, ſhe had that ſame day ſet out for a long journey, nor could any of her people tell when ſhe might return again to Paris. He called frequently at her door for ſeveral months, but as no intelligence had been received from her he gave up the purſuit, and thought no more about it.

William in the mean time grew in ſtature, as well as in wiſdom. Nothing could be more enchanting than his figure, nothing more amiable than his countenance, nothing more gentle than his manners; his application was great, and his progreſs aſtoniſhing: yet imaginary evils neſtled in the very midſt of his virtues, overclouding them with green and yellow melancholy, which at the end of two years acquired freſh force from the ſudden death of his firſt and beſt beloved friend Madame Dulays. Thoſe who on William's arrival at college had ſuppoſed he would do them no credit from his want of abilities, now that they found him eclipſe all competitors, treated him with the profoundeſt reſpect: in ſhort, he was adored by the whole community; the applauſes which he did not ſeek he modeſtly received, taking far leſs pleaſure in them than he felt in the unreſerved confidence of Monſieur Dumount;

not content merely with his converſation, he would keep himſelf waking ſome hours every night to recal the ſubject, and impreſs it on his memory. And why?—becauſe the Abbé Dumount's mind was tinctured with ſadneſs like his own—he had been deceived—he had been diſappointed, and his leſſons might have been highly ſalutary to any other pupil, with leſs ſombre diſpoſitions than thoſe by which William was influenced, even from his cradle.

"In ſociety," would he ſay, "there are none better than others; in the world every man is deceived, or a deceiver, which renders them alike miſtaken: if you would gain an aſcendency over the mind of man, you muſt flatter him for virtues he does not poſſeſs—you muſt praiſe him for what he is not—one who is well born, and rich, cannot be flattered on the ſcore of his birth, or his wealth; that would be all loſt labour, becauſe no doubt he is ſufficiently ſenſible of his grandeur, or good fortune; but if a libertine, talk to him of his regularity—if a coward, of his honour—if a miſer, of his charity—if a ſot, of his moderation—theſe, dear William, are the conductors to the friendſhip of a great man: yet this is not all, for whilſt you flatter him for his virtues, you muſt enter with him into all his vices; does he game, you muſt play—does he drink till he

he has loſt his ſenſes, you muſt do the ſame, to transform yourſelf into his likeneſs; otherwiſe you will be laughed at, called inſupportable, of too high ſentiments, of too ſtrong prejudices, one who can be neither pleaſant nor ſociable."

"Never, never," exclaimed William, with energy; "never will I render myſelf this contemptible animal."

"There is as much danger," continued the Abbé, "in being the *deceived*, as there is diſgrace in being the *deceiver*; we are in a fair way of becoming the former, when we liſten to a certain deſcription of men, who ſay they can do every thing, have ſeen every thing, and are capable of every thing; if one believes them, it is like taking ſhelter under the ſhadow of a tree, without thinking if the heart of it be ſound; you open to them your thoughts, they conceal their own—they abuſe your confidence—they plunge you into difficulties, from whence you cannot eſcape, but at the expence of your honour, your purſe, or your health: thoſe who would not be the dupes of vanity, vices, or boaſting, who will neither creep, cringe, nor accord, muſt live out of the world; or if forced into againſt their better judgment, they muſt have a ſyſtem made up of truth, regularity, a little complaiſance, and a great deal of reſolution, without expecting to be the more

more eſteemed for the uprightneſs of your conduct; they will ſay of him—Mr. Such-a-one is to be ſure a good ſort of man, but he has a weak head—no energy—no paſſions—no any thing that he ought to have—oh! if he was not a *good ſort of man*, there would be no bearing with him. Thus does he gain little credit for his probity, or his moderation. Whenever you leave the college to act your part on the ſtage of the world, you will find it crowded by ſuch ſort of players as I have been deſcribing; all of them, from intereſted motives, will try to cultivate your notice, if you happen to move in a higher ſphere than themſelves, but ſhould you be placed a little beneath them, you can have nothing to expect from your aſſociation with mankind, but abject ſcorn, or humiliating taunts. I do not ſpeak to you of the treaſon, the perfidy, the calumnies of thoſe who ravage on ſociety; what intereſt can any good man have in belonging to it? if we do not fly from its dangers, the conſequences are too natural, and by much too obvious to eſcape your penetration." Every word of this lecture, and of many others of ſimilar tendency, were engraved on the memory of William, hardly to be eradicated.

The ſolitude ſo fondly cheriſhed by theſe unworldly-minded companions, was not threatened by invaders; they had no acquaintance

quaintance—they never went out, but on holidays, to walk in the country, and then they only trod those paths least frequented by the human species on such occasions: they always carried about them a pocket library on gloomy or moral subjects, to heighten the pleasures of repose when tired with exercise: these books were, Young's Night Thoughts—the Meditations of Hervey amongst the tombs—or the *Zodiagne of Palingéne;* with some others much in the same stile. Sometimes they would wander to the sequestered woods of Belleville, not without often stopping in their way thither to admire the beautiful bosom of Nature, and to adore the God of Nature, by not overlooking the glory of his works, or passing them by in ungrateful silence.

In the woods of Belleville is a rising ground, from whence it was their great delight to watch the sun at its going down, to contrast that scene with the distant view of Paris, which they also commanded; one displayed to their ravished sight through clouds of gold and purple; the other almost concealed from their view by the envelope of a dark heavy atmosphere; whilst between the two extremes the peeping moon would just shew her bashful face, and again hide it under a passing cloud; sometimes playing with her shadow on the trees, and sometimes casting it on the waters

waters. On this favourite ſpot Dumount gave his moſt pleaſing, as well as inſtructive leſſons on natural philoſophy to his attentive pupil—here it was that they read together their favourite authors, and it was here that they would make reflections upon the numberleſs ſins which would be committed in Paris, from the ſetting of that day's ſun to the riſing of another—they would ſigh for what they could not prevent, then return to the college with a double reliſh for the innocent ſimplicity of their own enjoyments.

CHAP. III.

THE MAN MASQUED.

VINCENT, the ſervant who attended on William and Dumount, came haſtily to inform the latter that a very grand gentleman, alighting from a ſuperb carriage, had inquired for the Abbé Dumount, deſiring that he might ſpeak to him alone. The governor and his pupil caſt a look at each other; it was a look of anxiety and ſuſpicion; however, he haſtened out to meet this ſtrange viſitor, whilſt William, panting with emotion, held the door half open, and ſaw them as they paſſed, with their backs towards him, into an oppoſite apartment, where they remained ſhut up together more than an hour, which circumſtance did not a little increaſe the poor youth's inquietudes, who walking inceſſantly with rapid ſteps about his chamber, wondered what could be the meaning of ſo long an interview; at laſt Dumount entered it alone, and in a low voice, but with the ſtrongeſt demonſtrations of joy, "William! dear William!" whiſpered he, "I have been with your father.—I am ſure it is your father who ſent for me."

The

The young man fell into his arms; he could only cry out, "Is it poſſible! oh teach, teach me to bear this overwhelming happineſs!"

"Compoſe yourſelf, my child; I cannot poſitively aver that it is your father I have been talking with, but from every circumſtance I believe it to be him.—It is the ſame perſon who placed you under my care, he who has regularly diſcharged all the demands of college, who from time to time has ſo amply ſupplied us with private benefactions."

William ſqueezed the hand of his governor, but did not interrupt him.

"Yes," continued he, "this good man, whether he be your father or not, intends to educate you like a prince; he leaves fifty louis with me—he orders that you ſhall have the beſt maſters in Paris to finiſh you in drawing, dancing, and muſic; he is charmed with the repreſentations I have made of you—you are the expreſs image of him—take courage then, my amiable friend, thy father will no doubt ſoon acknowledge a ſon who will do him ſo much honour.

William aſked of Dumount if he could not procure for him an interview with the intereſting ſtranger.

"I would,"

"I would," ſaid he, with energy, "I would give worlds to ſee him, if but for one little moment."

"Your wiſh is natural," replied his kind preceptor; "it has been my endeavour to anticipate the ſucceſs of it. I have ventured to entreat the favour of this myſterious viſitor."

"Will he grant it—ſay dear Dumount, will he grant me this felicity?"

"He heſitated a long time in a ſtate of irreſolution—at laſt, with much reluctance, he conſented to ſee your face, but you are not to ſee his; he will have it covered with a maſk as long as you are in the room, no doubt to hide from your obſervation the very ſtriking likeneſs you bear to him."

"Ah! but he is gone," cried William, "he may never return again: this bleſſed opportunity of bathing his feet with my tears may be loſt to me for ever."

"No, child, no," replied the Abbé, with a ſofter voice, "he is ſtill in the houſe—I will go and bring him to you; but wait patiently, reſtrain your emotions; do nothing raſhly." He went out—the next moment came back with the ſtranger, whoſe features were concealed behind a maſk, which terminated at the bottom in a curtain of black taffety. What a moment for the amiable William! what a countenance,

nance, unveiled by every thing but his bluſhes, muſt he have preſented before the ſight of him he ſuppoſed to be his father.

He remembered the words of Dumount, as he precipitately ruſhed forwards, as if to throw himſelf either into the arms, or at the feet of the maſked figure—he drew back—he reſpectfully ſaluted him with his body, but his eyes emitted rays, animated by a thouſand unutterable ſenſations: the unknown waved his hand, as a ſign for him to be ſeated. Vincent placed chairs, and retired.

A ſhort ſilence enſued, William's whole attention was rivetted on one object—that object ſtood before him—he ſaw him unſteady—he ſaw him tottering, as if unable to ſupport himſelf—he ſaw him ſtruggling with the violence of his feelings, yet durſt not evince his own. At laſt the maſk ſat down and ſighed deeply, as he examined the features of the trembling youth.

This mute ſcene might have been much lengthened if Mr. Dumount, who perceived the diſtreſs of both parties, had not thought proper to interrupt their painful, though eloquent ſilence.

"William," cried he, "Monſieur is the benefactor who has the goodneſs to provide for your wants—to give you the education of a gentleman—if you would merit the continuation of his favours, purſue the

road

road you have taken—be grateful, and be diligent."

"True," ſaid the unknown, "I would have you grateful to the good Abbé Dumount for the kindneſs he beſtows on you—you cannot reſpect him too much, or love him too well."

William covered with confuſion hardly knew what to reply in his fettered ſituation; he might be too diffuſe, or he might not ſay enough; at laſt he ſtammered out his aſſurances of obedience to all the commands of his munificent protector; adding, nothing could ſhew the intereſt his parents took in his welfare ſo much as their having provided him with ſo worthy a tutor.

"And who has told you," exclaimed the maſk, in an angry tone, "who has dared to make you ſuppoſe Dumount was choſen by your parents? and who are your parents?"

"Ah Monſieur," returned William, ready to die at his ſternneſs, "be not diſpleaſed with the liberty of my expreſſion—alas! I do not know my parents—indeed I do not—I am a poor orphan; I have not a friend to give me bread but yourſelf.—Will you—can you direct me where I might find them?"

"Never," ſaid he, in a ſoftened voice, "never, my dear boy, ſpeak to me on the ſubject of your parents."

"But

"But——" cried William.

"But what?" haſtily replied the other.

"If you ſhould happen to ſee my father, dear, dear Sir, be not angry with me; but I would aſk you to tell him that his little William can no longer exiſt out of his preſence—tell him I look for him in every face I behold—that cries iſſue from my ſoul, but no father will hear them—tell him I would rather die at his feet, than live from him in ſplendid baniſhment."

"He cannot ſhew himſelf to you—it is *not* to be done."

"Then," retorted William, "he muſt be a very inſenſible, or a very barbarous man; either Nature does not ſpeak to his heart, or he ſtifles her voice—if he loved his ſon, he would overcome all obſtacles—you liſten to me—you ſhed tears—oh! that you would let me ſee your reſpectable countenance! quit, O quit the unfriendly maſk that hides the ſenſibility it cannot expreſs; for pity's ſake do not any longer conceal from me the father I reverence—on my knees I entreat you to let me behold him—I conjure you by your own, if you have ſtill one living, to hear the prayer of my petition—you tremble—well, if he is dear to you, you will not blame me who am endowed with the ſame ſentiments of duty, of affection—alas! can your kind ſoul reſiſt the pleadings of a wounded mind

mind—you retire from me—oh! my God! I ſhall be abandoned by *all*—every body will forſake the devoted William."

In pronouncing theſe words he fell down on a ſopha, nearly without motion, his hands covering his face, which was bathed in tears.

The Abbé Dumount, penetrated by the condition of his pupil, ſupplicated the unknown to end his torments.

"They are not greater than my own," ſaid the agitated maſk, ſobbing from the violence of his emotions—then lifting up his hands to Heaven, he exclaimed in an altered voice, "my God! what have I done, by ſubmitting my own will to that of another!—irreparable weakneſs! I ought never to have ſeen him—I deſired not to ſee him.—Dear unfortunate child, why did I ever conſent to behold thee—why plunge myſelf into this excruciating predicament.

Again he conſidered the wretched William with awful, but not ungentle attention—his eyes, that were before cloſed, opened to meet the glances of him in the maſk; in a fury of deſpair he jumped from his ſupine poſture, a noble firmneſs took poſſeſſion of his mind, and he ſaid, in a tone reſpectful, but determined, "Well, Sir, ſince you are obſtinate in driving me to madneſs, I know the only part that remains

mains for me to take—I have no parents to whom I am dear—I have no one tie in the whole univerſe to whom I am accountable—diſhonour, misfortune, ignominy itſelf will purſue me if I fail to do what I am reſolved to accompliſh. I die—by my death I relieve my family from a burden they conſider as intolerable. Adieu! Monſieur; adieu! my dear Dumount; I go from you for ever."

"Beloved, but raſh youth," cried the Incognito," art thou ignorant that thy death would cauſe alſo that of thy affectionate father."

"Ah! it is you—it is your very ſelf—I have no other—I will have no other father."

He threw himſelf into his arms, ſtill exclaiming, "You are my father! the voice of Nature cannot be ſilenced—you are my reſpectable father."

"My ſon! my ſon! thou haſt conquered." With one arm he preſſed him to his heart, with the other hand he removed the maſk from his face—a face full of noble expreſſion, on which the eyes of William feaſted with devouring eagerneſs; nor were his ears leſs regaled to hear himſelf announced the ſon of ſuch a father. It was now the turn of parental love to revel in triumph over the total defeat of caution; big drops rolled down the cheeks of the unknown

unknown—he drew the frantic William cloſer to his boſom—hung over him in a tranſport of fondneſs, who ſometimes laughing, ſometimes crying, now on his knees, and now hanging on the neck of his father, altogether made out a ſcene of joyful confuſion, ſo extremely complicated as will not admit of a regular rehearſal: in ſhort, all three of the actors (for Dumount took a ſenſible part in their ecſtaſy), ſeemed electrified by ſentiments new and charming, as if hardly able to ſupport an eclairciſſement ſo unexpected, ſo full of intereſt.

As ſoon as the paſſions were ſufficiently fatigued in the ſervice of Nature, the father of William began to collect his thoughts, and ſpoke to him in this manner: "My ſon, I have ever had the ſtrongeſt reaſons to remain unknown to you; theſe reaſons ſtill exiſt with their force undiminiſhed; it is true that you have wreſted from me a ſecret which I intended ſhould have died with me—you now know that I am your father—give me no cauſe to regret the confidence I place in you by a future act of diſobedience."

"Your happy William will live only to obey the deareſt, the kindeſt of fathers."

"Promiſe

"Promiſe me to obſerve, even to the very letter of the law, the commands I am going to impoſe on you."

"I promiſe every thing you can aſk, and when I do not perform the leaſt of your orders, let me no longer call you my tender, my beloved parent."

"Firſt, then, you are never to aſk me any queſtions concerning your mother; neither be curious to find out my name, or my quality; it is ſufficient to keep you innocent of actions unworthy of your birth, to know that you are born a gentleman—were I to tell you more it would coſt you your life, as well as the life of your father.

"Secondly, it is my expreſs commands that you never ſhew the ſmalleſt deſire to trace my footſteps, or to aſk after my fate, either directly or indirectly: the orders muſt aſtoniſh you, yet my deſtiny forces them from me. I have no treaſure ſo dear to my heart as you are, yet to you I owe all the extreme miſery of my exiſtence: alas! unhappy boy!" his eyes flaſhing fire as he ſpoke, "it was you who made me commit a crime——" He was proceeding, but ſtopped, as having already gone too far.—"Well," continued he, "you will remember what I ſay to you, and I promiſe to love you all the days of my life. Oh! my ſon, my dear William! think

think often of thy father; but think alſo, that by ſeeking to know more than he is willing to tell thee, thou wilt be the guilty cauſe of his puniſhment. I ſhall ſee you, I ſhall write to you, but you will never be made acquainted with my name." Then turning to the Abbé, "Monſieur Dumount," ſaid he," "I expect from you the ſame ſecreſy that I exact from my ſon, the ſame forbearance, the ſame caution—you are an honeſt, a worthy man, I am convinced of your merit: the perſon, at whoſe houſe we made up our acquaintance, has ſounded your eulogium, and recounted to me your misfortunes—I admit the ſeverity of them, but they are not the *moſt* ſevere that have ever been encountered." Again, addreſſing his ſon, "Adieu! William, I ſhall never abandon, but conſtantly watch over you."

William and Dumount regarded this aſtoniſhing man with ſuch profound veneration, that would he have permitted them to interrupt him, neither one nor the other would have found courage to try the experiment, and thoſe feelings, that the agony of his father communicated to the heart of William, might have ſeemed more intolerable, if the ſharpneſs of them had not been a little blunted by ſurpriſe at the many wonders which appeared to be wrapped up in the myſtery of his concealment.

The ſtranger having ended all that he intended to diſcloſe, haſtily renewed his careſſes; he preſſed to his heart the moſt engaging of ſons—he drew a ſuperb watch, enriched with diamonds, from his pocket, and ſaid, giving it into the hands of William, "Take this trifle to remind you of our firſt interview, and when it ſtrikes ten think of your father—what would you ſay? How would you tremble, if in future you ſhould know the ſolution of this enigma." His eyes were ſtreaming with tears—he tore himſelf from the embraces of his ſon, and, with his handkerchief held to his face, he abruptly fled out of the chamber, leaving the youth and his preceptor rooted to the ſpot on which they ſtood, neither of them moving nor ſpeaking for the ſpace of twenty minutes.

At length the joy of having found—of being acknowledged by a father, took precedence of all other ſenſations in the breaſt of William; with what tranſports did he fall on the neck of Dumount, and how when their tongues were looſed did they congratulate each other on the wonderful diſcovery.—Vincent, fortunately, was ignorant of the whole tranſaction, ſo that the ſecret would reſt in ſecurity, being only in their own keeping.

The exact ſimilitude of countenance William bore to his father firſt impreſſed

on the idea of Dumount that he was really his own ſon, the likeneſs was equally ſtriking to the youth himſelf; but this was not the only diſcovery he made, for at the very firſt ſight of his face he recollected to have ſeen him often at the ſide of Madame Dulays when ſhe took him with her to church; he remembered alſo that though he never ſpoke to either of them, yet his whole attention ſeemed taken up in obſerving them, which made him ſometimes aſk Madame Dulays if ſhe knew who he was, but ſhe could or would not ſatisfy his inquiries.

CHAP. IV.

THE WATCH STRIKES.

HOW precious to William the valuable trinket preſented to him by his half-diſcloſed parent; as having belonged to him, it was ineſtimable; as being his gift, it was a pledge of the favour with which that parent conſidered him; on the ſcore of beauty and novelty it had ſtill other claims on his admiration; a thouſand times was it examined minutely both by himſelf and the Abbé, but the latter could not help laughing at the childiſhneſs of his pupil, who did little elſe the whole day, except keeping it in his hand, and making it ſtrike for his amuſement: the more they looked at the richneſs of its ornaments, the more they were confirmed of the dignity and ſtate of its firſt owner: at length William opened the inſide caſe to obſerve its movements, and to his great ſurpriſe read this inſcription engraved on the plate—*the gift of love*, 1730—he ſhewed it to Dumount, who partook of his aſtoniſhment, becauſe it was eaſily to be ſeen that much trouble had vainly been taken to entirely eraſe the words which were ſo much mutilated, as

to

to eyes older than William's made it difficult to diſcern them, though the ſenſible preceptor, after a moment's reflection, revealed ſome conjectures to his pupil, founded on good reaſon, and which no doubt have already occurred to our penetrating reader, the diſcloſure of them is therefore unneceſſary.

Dumount was already aſleep, but William continued waking, reſtleſs, and agitated; he touched the ſpring of his watch—it ſtruck ten—the tumult of his mind increaſed with the repetition of every ſtroke; he recalled the words of his father—think of me when ten ſtrikes. A death-like coldneſs crept over his heart—an oppreſſion next to ſuffocation almoſt ſtopped reſpiration; he hid his head in the clothes, and the bed ſeemed to rock under him: at laſt he fell into an unquiet doze, which did not ſerve to tranquillize his diſordered imagination. He beheld his father in the viſion that preſented itſelf before him, pierced with wounds, and uttering the moſt piteous groans—he felt himſelf preſſed in the bloody arms of this terrible ſpectre; the ſtruggles he made awakened him in agonies, nor would he venture to ſleep any more for fear the ſame phantom might return to viſit him. Ever ready to imbibe gloomy ideas from the very nature of his education, he did not conſider how ration-

ally ſuch dreams were to be accounted for, by the extreme hurry of intereſting events, through which he had paſſed in the day, but preſaged to himſelf evils of every deſcription, of which this ſhocking dream was the Heaven-appointed harbinger.

Next morning the Abbé Dumount, from whom he concealed neither his pains nor his pleaſures, was informed of what he had ſuffered ſleeping and waking, nor did he diſguiſe that his ſoul anticipated a ſable train of misfortunes—ſuperſtition was not the error of Dumount; that weakneſs had originated in the mind of his pupil, from the natural ſadneſs of a ſedentary diſpoſition, or from the tales of his good old woman Madame Dulays; he therefore rallied him ſo effectually on the ſubject of encouraging unmanly credulity, that if William was not abſolutely cured of his fears, his terrors at leaſt were very much abated, and he purſued his ſtudies the reſt of that day with greater avidity than ever: but, alas! with the ſilence of the night his apprehenſions returned; they were uſhered to his pillow by contemplation—he laid down with the ominous watch in his hand—again it ſtrikes ten—and again he is overwhelmed in terrors.

"Merciful God!" cried he ſoftly, and ſpeaking to himſelf, "what are theſe emotions that choke me? to what intent am I thus

thus tortured? Ah! Monſieur Dumount is perfectly wrong—too portentous of miſery are my unaccountable feelings—yes, I ſhall be miſerable by inheritance—dear myſterious father, you meant more than you ſignified—your words were terrible, yet the tone in which you uttered them ſtill more alarming. Shall my ſuſpenſe never be removed—ſhall I never learn the whole extent of my misfortunes?"

It was already day-light; the laſt word quivered on his lips, and with a deep ſigh he fell aſleep in pronouncing it. Worn out by two nights of fatiguing reſtleſſneſs, he ſlept ſo ſoundly that whatever new viſion might have viſited his fancy he had no time to give it entertainment—the next morning he aroſe perfectly refreſhed, perfectly tranquil, and for the firſt time took leſſons from the moſt eminent maſters of Paris in dancing, drawing, and muſic, though in every one of theſe polite arts he before very much excelled his inſtructors.

Several months rolled away, and at the end of a long period the father of William entered again without a maſk into his ſon's apartment—this interview was leſs pathetic, yet little leſs intereſting than the former; they were entwined in the arms of each other, as if it had been their mutual wiſh never to ſeparate.

William's eyes ſparkled with joy, be-

cauſe he ſaw thoſe of his father not ſo full of ſorrow as when they laſt parted; he heard himſelf called by the moſt endearing epithets—he felt his hand ſtill preſſed between thoſe of his father, as they ſat down ſide by ſide.

Dumount, afraid of another too deep impreſſion on the tender ſpirits of his pupil, contrived to turn the attention of both to ſomething leſs dangerous than contemplating with mute expreſſion the looks of each other; he began by engaging the unknown upon the ſubject of his ſon's improvement—he particularly dwelt on the praiſes of his muſical powers, and at laſt prevailed on him to liſten whilſt William ſhould give him a ſpecimen of his abilities: he choſe for him a difficult piece, in the performance of which he excelled every body; he excelled even himſelf—his father heard him with tranſports of approbation—he was enchanted—he cried out in the middle of the leſſon, "Great God! how like he is to his mother." William heard the exclamation—his heart vibrated to the ſound of mother—his fingers for an inſtant reſted upon the keys of the inſtrument—he thought of his father's ſtern command, that he ſhould never preſume to ſpeak of his mother, and they were again in motion.

His father obſerved the ſtruggling impulſe,

pulſe, and gave him credit for the effort by which he had conquered it; he loaded him with careſſes, giving into the hand of Dumount fifty other louis; he thanked him for the progreſs of his ſon's education, but deſired that in future he might be made to mix with the world. "I would have him," ſaid he, "begin to enjoy the amuſements of it; but at the ſame time I charge him, on the forfeiture of my love, and the incurrence of my hate, never to open his lips on the ſecret of his birth."

William promiſed to obey all his commands, and they ſeparated very well ſatisfied with each other, though William had endeavoured to detain him longer, by taking out his watch to convince him it was not late: he only replied by ſhaking his head, and bidding him remember that whenever it ſtruck ten he could never think too much of his affectionate father—"Ah! what, my tender parent, happens to you at that hour?"

This queſtion ruſhed from the heart to the lips of William, and he could not ſuppreſs it.

"I am working then for my ſon—alas!—and for—what was I going to ſay—have I not commanded———what then do you mean?"

William was all contrition for his involuntary offence—he was forgiven—his father renewed his endearments, and pro-

miſed to return at the end of ſix months. In this manner paſſed the firſt three years of our hero's reſidence at College, and the myſtery continued to wear its own form, with this difference, that at every viſit he received from his father there was always a ſomething to make it ſtill more inexplicable; the only one circumſtance at which he ſhewed any diſpleaſure was the little zeal William diſcovered for going outſide the walls of his college. I beſeech you, he would ſay to Dumount, initiate my ſon to the uſe and enjoyment of ſociety; his diſpoſition is ſedentary, his ſpirits inclined to ſadneſs, unnatural at his age. I would have you diveſt him of that gloomy reſerve which ariſes from his entire ignorance of the world, and it is only by knowing it better that he will get rid of his prejudices.

On ſuch occaſions the good preceptor would promiſe every thing, but perform nothing; thoſe very ſolitary habits which his father wiſhed him to lay aſide, being held in the higheſt eſtimation by himſelf, who regarded the world and its pleaſures as a raging whirlpool, which made him extremely loath to conduct the footſteps of his ward to the brink of the precipice that overlooked it, leſt his head ſhould grow giddy, and he ſhould not be able to ſave him from deſtruction.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE CONJURER.

THERE ſtood outſide the gates of the college a very old man, nearly five ſcore years of age, who notwithſtanding every external mark of poverty, for he was covered with rags, ſtill preſerved a graceful figure and fine phyſiognomy. This venerable Recluſe was held in high reverence by the young ſtudents; they believed him to be a ſorcerer, and many were the ſtolen viſits they made him, always coming away in aſtoniſhment at the wonderful things he had told them, and in whiſpers eſtabliſhing his fame for divining paſt as well as future events.

The principal, without having much wiſdom to ſpare, had yet enough to ſhew him the impropriety of permitting the ſtately mendicant to put himſelf ſo much in the way of his ſcholars; he had more than once driven him off by threatening him with all manner of inflictions, if he ſhould dare to return any more—yet the old man always came back to his ſtation, knowing that the ground on which he had taken his ſtand did not belong to the college, of courſe

courſe was as free for him as another; beſides, he never aſked charity, therefore no mode could be adopted to puniſh or to get rid of him.

Ever ſince William became the poſſeſſor of his father's watch, and as often as he conſidered the myſterious expreſſions by which the gift was accompanied, he thought very much of the conjurer; he wiſhed to apply for an explanation to a ſage of ſo much reputed knowledge, but whenever he had acquired courage enough to ſet about it, the fear of offending the Abbé Dumount, who might poſſibly inform his father, made him relinquiſh the deſign, or rather keep it in reſerve till the abſence of his governor ſhould give him a favourable opportunity to indulge his curioſity undiſcovered.

For this opportunity the impatient William had waited many a tedious month, but at laſt it preſented itſelf to him on the Abbé's going out of the college without him, to viſit a ſick friend, which muſt neceſſarily detain him long enough for the execution of his projection. He immediately paſſed through the gates, took the old man's hand, and without ſpeaking a word led him ſoftly to his chamber; every thing conſpired to his wiſhes; the porter was occupied on other buſineſs, and Vincent out of the way, ſo that he was ſure he ſhould

ſhould meet with no interruption. When they were ſhut up together William commenced the converſation, by queſtioning him concerning his age, his country, and his occupation. Having anſwered to the two former interrogations, the latter ſeemed to puzzle him a little: at laſt he replied, that his occupation was of all others the moſt dangerous, and the leaſt recompenſed.

"I am," ſaid he, "a ſoldier—and a neglected one—that I have ſerved in the army with honour—that I have fought for my country with courage—let theſe wounds be the vouchers: upon ſaying which he diſplayed eight places in his body ſcarified by the ſword or the ball of an enemy; adding, "what I get for theſe ſacrifices are inſult and beggary—know, young gentleman, the little have always leſs profit than danger; the great, ſmaller trouble and larger benefits."

William liſtened to him with pleaſure and ſurpriſe: "Ah!" ſaid he, "my friend, it is not thoſe who defend the ſtate that require to be enriched for their ſervices—it is ſuch as yourſelf who deſerve to be recorded in its annals, and ſupported by its bounties."

The brave ſoldier ſhook his gray hairs; "Maſter," replied he, "you do not ſeem to underſtand that thoſe who moſt oppreſs the

the ſtate are generally the beſt provided for—how ſhould you know it? Senſe is the gift of nature, but judgment comes by experience."

"You charm me extremely," ſaid William, "yet I am informed you poſſeſs other talents, beſides thoſe of reaſoning; I would very fain be made to comprehend by what ſtudy you acquired the ſublime art of divination."

"In the garriſons," returned he, "we have much leiſure, which we occupy in ſuch ſort of inquiries: one finds theſe people from all countries, by which means it is no hard matter to pick up inſtructions, ſometimes from one, ſometimes from another."

"I am going to aſk you a queſtion," ſaid William.

"Good," replied the old man, "ſay on, my child, and fear nothing."

"Well then, father, thus it is—a perſon, who is dearer to me than life, ſaid ſomething on giving me this watch, and has repeated the ſame words many times ſince; indeed I never ſee that perſon without his repeating them."

"What may theſe words be?"

"Think of me when this watch ſtrikes ten—ah! Monſieur, can you explain to me the meaning of this myſterious command?"

"What

"What is it you would know from my ſkill?—ſpeak to the point—what is the particular queſtion you would aſk me to reſolve?"

"If it were poſſible, reſpectable old man, I would be told exactly what that perſon is about as the watch ſtrikes ten."

"Nothing is more poſſible—I will give you all the ſatisfaction you require, but you muſt place a confidence in my honour; you muſt truſt your watch in my hand."

William delivered it to him with a good grace—ſuddenly the ſuppoſed ſorcerer, plunged in reverie, began calculating—after which he ſat down at a table, and wrote for about an hour; then riſing, he announced, in a ſolemn prophetic tone that would have made any body laugh leſs tinctured by ſuperſtition than the pupil of Dumount,

"The man who gave you this watch received it himſelf from the hands of a woman—this ſame man is every night at ten o'clock confined in a priſon, from which he is not releaſed till the morning of the next day."

William ſhuddered—the ſentence was a terrible one—he might have ſunk under it, if a gleam of that bright underſtanding he poſſeſſed in a ſuperlative degree, if one ſingle ray of ſenſe unimpregnated by error, had not ſhot acroſs his mind, to enlighten

lighten him with the recollection that no dependance was to be placed on the ſupernatural powers of any created being—as if God would lend his wiſdom to aid the folly of fools, or the ſhadow of it to cover the deceptions of impoſtors. Theſe were the thoughts of a moment—and again he conſidered it a mighty odd circumſtance, that this old man ſhould be able to tell him the watch was given by a lady to his father, a ſecret that had long been ſurmiſed both by himſelf and Dumount, and the very ſame which we have before recommended to the ſagacity of our penetrating reader.

Notwithſtanding that the credulity of William was a good deal ſhaken, very much to the repoſe of his mind, yet he demanded of the fortune-teller by what means he had diſcovered the perſon for whom he was intereſted paſſed ſo much of his time in a priſon.

"To people of my profeſſion," ſaid the old man, "every thing is cabaliſtic—a watch—a portfeuille—a ring—no matter what—each have their ſigns, which are always the ſame—theſe we explain differently, according to certain obſervations. The watch is the ſymbol of life—if one o'clock is the moment of birth, it is an unlucky hour—it foretels inſenſibility, inconſtancy, much trouble, and little fortitude. Two o'clock marks the age of ſix years,

years, devoid of care—full of agility—bending to caprice—haters of none—lovers of themſelves, and contented with all.—Three o'clock anſwers to the age of nine—it has its reflections—its pains—its tears—its inquietudes, and its full work. I could thus explain to you, one after another, all the hours, and their portentous omens; but I ſtop at the point of ten, being that wherein you are more immediately concerned. Ten—o'clock is the age of ſixty-three—it ſignifies a proud ſoul—heavineſs of ſpirit—coldneſs of judgment—a body of great ſize ſtooping with years, oppreſſed by bonds—writhing in chains—every hour forms a contraſt to another—that which oppoſes ten is ſix—it is the age of eighteen, juſt as the bars of infancy are broken down, when the paſſions are our maſters—this hour ſignifies variety of enjoyments—exquiſite pleaſures—but of ſhort duration—poiſoned by remorſe for the paſt, embittered by fears for the future."

William's gravity, thus beſieged by ſuch vollies of nonſenſe, could hardly make any longer a defence againſt the ſtrong inclination he felt to turn both the philoſopher and himſelf into ridicule; what protected the one was his age—ſelf reſpect pleaded in behalf of the other; he therefore let the old man dream on without ſhewing

ſhewing any ſymptom either of mirth or diſapprobation. "You now ſee, Monſieur Student, that by expoſing to you my ſecret, you can with a little trouble define the myſtery of the watch as well as myſelf; divide the hours into three years, every one to end at midnight, which is the time of death—make it the repeater of the moral ſituation of each epoch of your friend's life, by which eaſy method you will find out that he is in affliction—that every night at ten o'clock he is under reſtraint, confined in a priſon, and languiſhing in chains; but as every hour has its oppoſite in the good and evil of a man's life, ſo at day-break the perſon you wiſh well to is releaſed from his confinement, and thinks no more about it, becauſe he is happy enough for all the day afterwards—can any thing be more clear than the truths I am telling?"

William ſmiled.

"I am yet willing," continued the conjurer, "to give you further proofs of my ſkill." He then proceeded to make ſome ſigns—examined his hands, his eyes, and his other features. "Here are very kindly appearances, my ſon—you will be very great—very rich—very happy—you are to marry a handſome lady—you will love her well—you will love her long—but all this good fortune ſhall not arrive till you have paſſed through many ſad reverſes."

"I accept

"I accept the terms of your augury with a great deal of pleaſure," replied the youth; "if I am ever happy, I will make you happy alſo."

"You are joking with me, my good maſter."

"By no means—I reſpect your age—I pity your poverty—for theſe I will protect you."

"Ah! Monſieur Student do you allow nothing to my ſkill?"

"It is the only part of your claims for which I give you no honour."

"Well, but remember, young gentleman, when my predictions are verified, you ſhall behold the old ſoldier at your gate."

"With all my heart," ſaid William, giving him money, and ſending him away well ſatisfied; but he blamed himſelf for having indulged a weak, if not a guilty curioſity.

Notwithſtanding our hero was accompliſhed beyond all example, yet he took no ſort of delight in the advantages his acquirements gave him—vanity had none of theſe charms for him, which it poſſeſſes for the generality of mankind; to an anxious ſoul like his, even the applauſes of an admiring world would have been unreliſhed; but as long as he carefully ſhunned ſociety he had no opportunities of trying the effects

of

of it by experience—he did not even know of what uſe his knowledge was to him—he neither frequented concerts nor ſpectacles; if he played, it was only to chace melancholy reflections from his mind; if he danced, no body ſaw him but his maſter who gave him leſſons; and if he ſung, his charming voice was only heard by the Abbé Dumount, who would have loved him with equal fondneſs, whether he had croaked like a raven, or chanted like a nightingale; nor had he much ear to diſtinguiſh between them.

The greateſt amuſement of theſe retired friends was found in their country walks, which opened to their ſtudious minds a large field for unbounded obſervation; theſe little excurſions were the grand regale of philoſophic inquiries, which to ſuch as like the world better, or nature leſs than themſelves, would not have been ſo prolific of pleaſure and improvement as they were productive of both to our two collegiates.

CHAP. VI.

THE YOUNG MAN IN THE WOOD.

WILLIAM and Dumount having rambled as uſual to their favourite woods of Belleville, they had ſeated themſelves on the graſs to admire the ſetting ſun, juſt as the moon was beginning to diſpute with it the lighting of the world; they obſerved the ſolemnity of the glorious ſcene before them in awful ſilence, which nothing interrupted but the gentle ruſh of a natural caſcade, that modeſtly concealed itſelf at a diſtance, till the ſound of a human voice, which uttered only deep ſighs of diſtreſs, awakened them from their reverie.—They ſtarted up—they looked every where about them—at laſt they ſaw a young man, who hid himſelf behind a bank—they watched his motions—he was charging a piſtol with quickneſs—it was done in an inſtant—our two timid adventurers at firſt feared for their own ſakes—they expected he would have fallen upon them, but when they heard him ſend forth an exclamation of horror, and ſaw him point the piſtol to his mouth they forgot themſelves; they thought only how they might preſerve him from deſtruction

deſtruction—he did not ſee them as they approached towards him, but they, on perceiving he yet ſuſpended the fatal ſtroke, and that he ſeemed rather inclined to ſpeak than to fire, ſtood ſtill to hear what he was going to ſay.

"Why do I heſitate?" cried he, "I have loſt every thing—to die is but to ſleep—yes, I embrace thee, Death—I embrace thee with all my heart—it is but a moment's pain, and all will be forgotten. Yes all—fools only think of conſequences—I know what I am—and I am eaſy as to what I ſhall be—ſo come good piſtol, and do thy buſineſs." He once more brought it on a level with his mouth—there was no time to be loſt—they made themſelves obſerved by calling out, and bidding him deſiſt from his impious purpoſe.

"Young man," ſaid Dumount, in a tone of authority, "what is the crime you dare to meditate; I have overheard thy odious opinions, yet I would not only ſave thy life, prevent thee from ruſhing into the preſence of thy inſulted Creator, with all thy ſins of infidelity unrepented, but I would alſo eradicate from thy trembling ſoul the errors that have maſtered, whatever of divine eſſence may have once informed it."

Surpriſed at the ſudden appearance of an eccleſiaſtic, ſupported by a youth, whoſe figure

figure reſembled that of man, before he fell from his original ſtate of innocence, the deſperate deſigner ſtopped a moment, as if collecting his thoughts, then ſaid—

"How can my opinions concern you, Monſieur, unleſs you are to be made anſwerable for them? I hate preaching—leave me, Sir; I have no time to beſtow on indifferent matters—my immediate buſineſs is to cut the thread of my troubleſome exiſtence—and I will do it—it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe." Here many tears followed, and he ſobbed vehemently—then added, "there is, there can be no other cure for my miſeries."

"Of what nature are thoſe miſeries that force you to deſpair of a remedy?"

"They are complicated—I have no leiſure to divide them."

"Hear me for a moment—want certainly is unnumbered with your misfortunes—your exterior announces that you are not reckoned amongſt the ſons of poverty."

"Has not your age, Monſieur, already taught you experience—then learn it from me—nothing is ſo deceitful as appearances—never judge of a man, either by his dreſs or addreſs—you ſuppoſe me rich, becauſe my habit is in no ſtate of decay—yet for all that I am poverty-ſtricken. You think from the too great freedom of my

my opinions I would not make them better if I could—there again you are equally miſtaken—my mind has changed within the laſt moment, and if you can ſay any thing to comfort me, I am now willing to hear it."

" Since you make this confeſſion I have ſome hopes of you—I am inclined to be the friend of your wounded conſcience—my function is the bond of my probity, as well as diſcretion—you are unfortunate—I have been unfortunate—this good youth, who is my Eléve, like us has ſuffered a ſad deſtiny—come, give me that piſtol, we ſhall have no uſe for it. I will conduct your thoughts to that ſupreme Deity with whom you are yet unacquainted—He is the friend of all who put their confidence in him—He will accept your penitence—He will pity and relieve you—ſet down by my ſide—you intereſt me—the horrors I felt begin to abate.—Oh! my God! how happy I ſhall be if it pleaſes thee that I ſhould become the inſtrument of this poor miſtaken creature's reformation."

The young man readily enough yielded the piſtol into the hands of his intentional preſerver. " Let us throw it far away," ſaid Dumount, caſting it from him—he then took his penitent by the hand, and forced him to ſet down by his ſide.

William

William followed all their motions with a palpitating heart, aſtoniſhed that his tutor, who, except himſelf, was the moſt ſuſpicious of all men, ſhould fail to miſtruſt; nay even put himſelf into his power, and for the firſt time in his life he ventured to accuſe him of imprudence.

"Come now," continued the venerable Abbé to the ſtill ſullen incognito, "you muſt begin to engage my friendſhip by truſting me with your whole confidence—you muſt tell me what are your misfortunes, and through what ſource they have accumulated."

"Through the ſource of my own imprudence." He then recounted to them a tiſſue of diſaſters, which, though very terrible, preſented no occaſion of blame to be thrown on his own character, notwithſtanding he had ſeemed to hint that he had drawn them on himſelf by his bad conduct; he informed Monſieur Dumount that he had been ſecretary to a Count d'Egeville; from which ſituation, owing to the treachery of a pretended friend, he had been diſcarded with ignominy; in ſhort, that he found himſelf without a reſidence, without fortune, without reſources of any kind.

The humane Abbé, whilſt endeavouring to conſole him under his afflictions, took out his purſe, and preſented him with a

piece of gold, which he received with ſuch extravagant demonſtration of gratitude, that William, who till now had been a ſuſpicious ſpectator, began to feel his heart intereſted for him—he alſo drew out his purſe to double the gift of his governor, when the wretch, his eyes flaſhing fire at the ſight of ſo much gold, fixed them on both, in a manner that terrified them; ſaying, in a voice bold, imperious, and determined, "Why do you ſet ſuch feeble bounds to your liberality? You have a great deal of money—give it me inſtantly, or you die on the ſpot." Terrified and trembling they looked round to ſee if any one was near to whom they might call out for aſſiſtance, the road being within the reach of their cries, but no ſounds iſſued from it; night was quick in its approaches, and all that was active in their ſpirits ſeemed to be frozen up by ſurpriſe, terror, and indignation.

"This heſitation will do you no good," exclaimed the ruffian; "deliver, or die." Saying this he expoſed to their view another piſtol, the fellow to that which Dumount had thrown at a diſtance—unaided—unarmed—unable to reſiſt, they could only load him with reproaches whilſt they gave him their purſes—but the villain was not yet contented; he ſaw the chains of their watches, and demanded them alſo.

William

William could part with his money much more calmly than with the beloved watch, the gift of an adored parent—the very demand of it made him forget how badly he was prepared for combat, and ſtimulated him to act the part of a hero—fury took poſſeſſion of his ſenſes—

"Traitor!" cried he, drawing a knife from his pocket, "you ſhall not have my watch, but at the expence of my life."

The Abbé, animated by the example of his pupil, ſnatched the piſtol from the aſſaſſin's hand, who immediately cloſed with them; but before the ſcuffle between them, for he was ſtronger than both, had produced any deſperate effect, ſome horſemen, and a carriage, came within the diſtance of their voices, when raiſing them to the higheſt pitch of which they were capable, the villain broke from their hold, took the alarm, and flew from them with ſpeed almoſt incredible.

Finding they were at liberty, the only uſe they could make of it was, to look on each other with indeſcribable terror; and they were ſtill ſtanding in mute aſtoniſhment when the very people appeared who had ſo fortunately occaſioned their releaſe from the moſt imminent danger; reaſſured by their preſence, they recovered their faculties. Theſe men aſked them many queſtions, and having liſtened to the ad-

venture, one of them cried out pretty abruptly, "Are you ſure all this that you tell us is true?"

"Is it poſſible," ſaid William, "that we ſhould become the objects of your ſuſpicions?"

"Let the old gentleman give me the piſtol he holds in his hand," replied the other, "and I ſhall then know better what to think of the matter."

The readineſs of the Abbé to comply with this demand, removed every exiſting doubt; and having congratulated both on their happy eſcape, the man who received the piſtol tried to fire it in the air, but finding it did not go off, in looking for the obſtruction they diſcovered, to the ſurpriſe of every body, that it carried no charge, either of ball or powder; a phenomenon, for which none of them being able to account, they agreed to return all together by the gate St. Antoine.

CHAP. VII.

CABINET COUNCIL.

FINDING themſelves ſafe within the walls of their college, they very ſoon recovered their tranquillity enough to enter into converſation; and it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Abbé Dumount let ſlip ſuch an opportunity to lecture his pupil upon the vices of mankind.

"My dear boy," ſaid he, "what a leſſon—what a melancholy leſſon have we been taught in this evening's expedition—behold men as they are—learn to deſpiſe their perfidy—they are all ingrates—they plunge a poignard into your heart at the moment you offer them your hand: by their very nature they are treacherous—oblige them eternally—load them with favours—ſhew them all manner of humanity—make yourſelf the ſlave of ſenſibility in hearing them talk of their troubles—of bearing a part in them: do all this, and what is the reward you get for your civility—for your gifts—for your ſympathy? Ah! they will never recompenſe your benefits with any thing but ingratitude."

"My father—ſure my father is an exception."

The good governor nodded his approbation—a pauſe enſued—again he reaſſumed his favourite topic.

"I owe," ſaid he, "all the miſeries of my life to a variety of men's treachery, hardly inferior to what we ſo lately experienced in the woods of Belleville—if they did not hold a piſtol to my head, they were not leſs cruel, for they planted a thouſand daggers in my heart; and it is the ſmart which even now I feel from thoſe cureleſs wounds which makes me anxious to expoſe before you all the dangers of ſociety—without my inſtructions, inexperienced as you are, you might have taken a fatal liking for men of the world—you might have ruſhed on that world with the confidence of a youthful imagination, and not have diſcovered the error of ſuch conduct, until what is called ſociety had made you the victim of its infernal calumnies; a deadly poiſon that hides its venom under the faireſt words, and the moſt ſmiling looks—if you give them all you poſſeſs, they will profeſs themſelves your debtors: believe them not—they only engage you by their pretended acknowledgments to multiply your bounty."

"This is a very frightful picture indeed—I even think it of a deeper ſhade than any

any you have yet ſketched on the canvaſs of caution: yet, my dear friend, I believe religiouſly every word you tell me, and your advice ſhall ever be the rule of my actions.—Alas!" added he, with a ſigh, "what a pity that man ſhould be ſo unmerciful, though created by the God of mercy!"

"Your obſervation is a juſt one, and it is becauſe we will not be grateful to our Maker that he permits us to prey upon each other: it is for this reaſon that vice ſtalks about the world, ſometimes clothed in hypocriſy, ſometimes in hardened nakedneſs—it is a ſword of the Almighty, and is the puniſhment of thoſe who daringly offend him—we ſhall never ſee it vanquiſhed, becauſe that power who permits can alone vanquiſh it."

"Dear Sir, I had rather, much rather know my enemy, than have him act againſt me under a maſk."

"But that is a very difficult judgment to attain—one will cut your throat, and look in your face whilſt he is doing it—another will do the ſame office, without ſhewing himſelf: he who is moſt likely to do you no harm is he whoſe character has little in it of conſequence—and theſe, againſt whom you ſhould be moſt on your guard, are ſuch as profeſs themſelves all fire—all zeal—all energy to ſerve and to

love you. Naturally you attach yourſelf to the latter deſcription of your foes, who will ſpeak great things of you when they are ſure they will be repeated to you, but againſt you on all other occaſions: with your friends they will be the ſmootheſt of your friends—with your enemies, the bittereſt of your enemies."

"Pray, Monſieur Abbé, will you allow me to interrupt you for a moment, to aſk the reaſon (for I know you do nothing without a reaſon) why you truſted to the appearance of that villain, before he aſſaulted us in the woods."

"Humanity, my dear pupil, is a principle of ſo active a nature, that it will ſometimes drive caution from her ſtation, and philanthropy will lull it to repoſe.—I was to blame—I was extremely culpable—ah! how blind, how conceited of my ſuppoſed wiſdom, to fancy that by the ſtrength of it I ſhould be able to convert a ſinner, whom a moment before, in my own hearing, had impiouſly denied his God—had flown in the face of his Maker—and was madly ruſhing, unbidden, into his awful preſence—by theſe traits I ſhould have known him for the conſummate wretch he afterwards proved himſelf—thoſe who are not religious are incapable of harbouring one virtuous ſentiment."

"But

"But what, my good Sir, whoſe very weakneſſes are amiable, what could be the cauſe, that when we examined the piſtols we found neither of them had been charged?"

"It ſhews the depredator did not go to the woods predetermined on plunder or ſelf-deſtruction; for what other cauſe he came, this is beyond the line of my penetration to fathom: but we may conclude, that it was the unexpected ſight of our gold which awakened his baſe paſſions, and kindled the ſordid flame of avarice in his abject heart, making him turn with deſperation on his benefactors."

"Ah! Monſieur, may not extreme indigence——"

"I know what you would ſay—I know alſo the full force of the argument you mean to advance—but, my dear young friend, it is erroneous—you nor I muſt not try to ſupport as juſt what all laws, moral and divine, have announced unjuſt. An honeſt man, how great ſoever his extremity, cannot change his nature to commit a diſhoneſt action: rather than adopt to his neceſſities the means of others, he will either die, or drag on his feeble exiſtence by the aid of ſuch voluntary offerings as the children of charity ſometimes make to the children of poverty."

"Good God!" exclaimed William, "it is hard to ſtarve; yet it is ſtill harder to depend for the preſervation of life on a world, every member of which is impregnated with unfeeling barbarity."

"Notwithſtanding there is much good ſenſe in this opinion of your's, yet I object to it; for among the cruelties of which I accuſe mankind, that of withholding their money from the neceſſitous has not been numbered: on the contrary, what merit can be claimed by indiſcriminate bounty may belong to the rich, if they had a better motive for their charity than that of popularity *."

* I had a great inclination entirely to ſuppreſs this too high painting of a good mind prejudiced by education, and narrowed by diſappointments; but on reading to an end the manuſcript, I find theſe leſſons, which the amiable, but miſtaken preceptor ſo liberally beſtowed on his pupil, are abſolutely neceſſary to be brought forward in excuſe of our hero, who we ſhall ſee, at the concluſion of this hiſtory, bluſhing at his errors, and nobly exerting himſelf to correct them.

CHAP. VIII.

A FIRST STEP INTO THE GREAT WORLD.

DUMOUNT, to render his moral leſſons more intereſting, and to impreſs them deeper on the mind of his pupil, wiſhed to bring him acquainted with the real ſituation of the depredator in the woods of Belleville. In relating his adventures he had diſcovered to them that he was *ci-devant* ſecretary of a Count d'Egeville, which nobleman had a ſon placed in the college of Navarre in the ſame claſs with William, and more in his favour than any other of the ſtudents. Indeed the young D'Egeville was the only one with whom he ever aſſociated, not becauſe he remarked in him any very eſſential qualifications, but becauſe he fancied him to have leſs faults than the reſt.

This young man, who did juſtice to the muſical powers of his friend, had very often tormented him with ſolicitations that he would go with him to the houſe of his father, if it were only to hear his ſiſter play; aſſuring him, with much energy, that ſhe performed in a very ſuperior ſtile on the harpſichord. It was theſe repeated invitations

invitations which put it into the head of Dumount, that by accepting one of them William might make ſome diſcoveries concerning the man who occupied ſo much of their curioſity: this idea he quickly communicated to his other ſelf, who readily adopted it, with even more ſanguine expectation than the original projector, who dared to hope, but ſeldom ventured to believe.

D'Egeville, charmed by a compliance ſo marvellous, and willing to ſecure his triumph, named the next day, which chanced to be a holiday, for paying a viſit to his family; Dumount included himſelf in the party, diſguſted as he was with the world, rather than be ſeparated from his pupil; on the firſt combat his paſſions would probably encounter; he had heard D'Egeville ſpeak of Mademoiſelle his ſiſter ſo much in the ſtrain of panegyric, that he conceived it impoſſible that his young friend was not to feel the impreſſion of her charms at their firſt interview.

Count d'Egeville lived in the rue St. Louis; it was near four o'clock when they arrived at the door of his houſe, followed by Vincent, who carried under his arm ſome muſic for his young maſter, which having put into the hands of a domeſtic, he returned back to the college; and the two gentlemen were conducted by the ſame

ſervant

ſervant to a ſuperb ſaloon, announcing their names to five or ſix men, who with a greater number of females were collected to receive them.

It would have been a difficult matter in ſuch an aſſembly for our two baſhful viſitors to have diſtinguiſhed where their firſt compliments were due, if the young Chevalier had not removed their embarraſſment by an immediate preſentation to his father and mother, who not only received them graciouſly, but even oppreſſed them with their unmeaning civilities.

The Chevalier d'Egeville had repreſented William as one of the beſt muſical performers that any country could boaſt the honour of producing, ſo that every body was prepared to give him no reſpite until he ſhould have complied with their eager ſolicitations to treat them with a ſpecimen of his ſkill: glad to be relieved from a ſituation ſo new, and ſo awkward, he readily ſat down at the harpſichord, but not without firſt gracefully offering the precedence to Mademoiſelle d'Egeville, who very ſmilingly refuſed the compliment he intended for her.

William was ſomething of a poet as well as a muſician; but the natural gloom of his mind tinctured all his productions—he was ever the hero of his own verſes, and though his compoſitions were conſonant to the

the fine rules of harmonics, yet the plaintive ſadneſs of the vibrating notes he drew were ſure to pierce the heart in the ſame degree as they pleaſed the ear and ſatisfied the judgment—that to which he gave his ſuffrage, in preference to all his other little pieces, was a ſong written and compoſed before he had ſeen his father—it was this favourite which he ſelected for the preſent occaſion, ſinging it to the ſoft tones of the inſtrument with an air ſo touching, that poor Dumount's cheeks were moiſtened with tears as he liſtened to the repetition of theſe misfortunes, which he knew to be not altogether fabulous: the words may be given here, but the energy with which he chanted them is only to be felt—it cannot be deſcribed.

SONG.

When the gloom of the night ſhall cover my eyes,
When the foreſt reſounds with my heart-rending ſighs;
Then darkneſs, thou friend of a wretched forlorn,
Prolong thy ſad empire, and chace away morn:
Whoſe beams are obtruſive on ſorrow's dim ſight,
But come melancholy, attendant on night,
Come birds of ill omen, and lengthen her train,
To *me* light is darkneſs, and pleaſure is pain.
As I run through the ſtorm, the winds howling round,
Their hoarſe voice reſounding, appeaſes my wound;
Inflicted by ſadneſs, corroded by woe,
It's torment purſues me wherever I go.

Ah!

Ah! father ſo tender—ah! mother ſo mild,
Will you ever thus fly your unfortunate child?
Dear ſources of anguiſh! of anguiſh how vain,
You feel not my anguiſh, or hear me complain:
On the wings of ſwift echo I ſend you my ſighs,
But echo unfriendly brings back no replies;
O father! O mother! my ſenſes are flown;
Cut off in life's bud, I expire with a groan!

William having made an end of his ſong modeſtly received the flattering applauſes of the whole company; whilſt Dumount, who regarded Mademoiſelle d'Egeville rather as a juſt than partial critic, obſerved with ſatisfaction that the praiſes ſhe beſtowed on his pupil did not derange the compoſure of his features, or add to the ſedate expreſſion of his fine eyes one ray of vivacity—truth obliges us to ſay that this faſhionable belle was ſo little formed after the model of beauty or elegance, which William had made to himſelf as the criterion of feminine perfection, that his governor could not behold her with leſs approbation, or more indifference, than he did; yet when ſhe aſked him to give her the words and muſic of his ſong, he granted her requeſt with politeneſs ſo natural, with gentleneſs ſo impregnated with grace, as gave her no reaſon to be diſſatisfied, or to think herſelf neglected.

The young lady having promiſed to perform after William, now took his place at the harpſichord, and having tumbled over all

all the ſongs in his *portfeuille*, ſhe choſe a compoſition of his maſter's, which, with a thouſand airs of diſtortion, meant to repreſent the graces, ſhe executed, without ear or finger, in a ſtile ſo execrable, that had the compoſer witneſſed her efforts he would hardly have known it to be his own: however, when ſhe had completely mangled both the ſenſe and the expreſſion, there were not in the room, except our preceptor and his pupil, any pair of hands but what were clapped together in a perfect paroxyſm of ecſtaſy at the wonders of her exquiſite performance.

"And this," cried William, "mentally is the ſincerity of the world."

Such as have the leaſt pretenſions are always the moſt eaſy to be flattered; the truth of which obſervation was exactly verified by this little pretender to muſic, who received the homage of her admirers with a ſelf-ſufficiency which ſeemed to ſay none of them had a higher opinion of her abilities than ſhe herſelf entertained of them: under this unfortunate prepoſſeſſion ſhe continued to ſing, and to play, until the very beſt of her friends began to give ſymptoms that they had quite enough of it, the ſtrongeſt of which was their entering into ſmall chatting parties; ſoon after a wider circle formed itſelf, where the pleaſures

ſures of converſation ſucceeded to thoſe of harmony.

"Is it a long time ſince," ſaid a fierce looking officer, of a haughty demeanour, ſpeaking to Mademoiſelle d'Egeville, "is it an age ago that you laſt ſaw your friend the Chevalier d'A———?"

"My friend!" ſcreamed out the muſical lady, "aſk me for him by any other appellation than that of *my* friend, and I ſhall tell you he has quite abandoned me, as well as all the reſt of his friends."

"It is only love that can ſuperſede friendſhip," ſaid a kind of preſident, who would be thought a *belle eſprit*."

"Good!" interrupted an overgrown Abbé, "I have juſt been informed the Chevalier has parted with his opera girl."

"Not at all," replied an old baroneſs, bending under a burden of diamonds; "I think I ought to know, and I aſſure you they are always together—I allow he has a mighty depraved taſte; but indeed if he had the *means* to attach himſelf to a woman of condition, his preſent connection would be a great deal more inexcuſable."

"Between ourſelves," ſaid the Abbé, "do you think he is much calculated to mix in good company?—they ſay——"

"Ah! what do they ſay," interrupted the officer.

"What would you infer?" cried Madame d'Egeville.

"Charming!"

"Charming!" purſued the Abbé, "ſo you really all pretend to know nothing of the matter—is it poſſible you have not heard that his birth is illegitimate?—nay, I ſee by this general ſurpriſe the affair has been a ſecret till I had the honour of revealing it."

"O Heavens!" exclaimed the whole circle in one voice.

CHAP. IX.

MORE GENERAL CONVERSATION.

NOTHING can be more true—he is certainly illegitimate—his father, to be ſure, was Count A——; but then his mother—nobody knows any thing of his mother—not ſo much as her name has ever tranſpired, or I ſhould have the pleaſure to announce it in your reſpectable circle.

"How is it, Abbé, that you are convinced of this extraordinary anecdote?"

"Becauſe he confided it to me himſelf—do you require any better authority?"

"My God! that is very abominable—and to take upon him the title of Chevalier—but ſoftly, Abbé," added the ſparkling baroneſs of diamonds, "may not the father of this pretended Chevalier be alſo illegitimate?"

"Oh, no! I am the moſt intimate of his friends—I have lived with him ſix months at a time—I have more than once ſeen his titles—no, it is impoſſible that any body can diſpute his deſcent."

"But," cried Madame d'Egeville, lifting up her hands, whilſt her eyes flaſhed fire

fire, which might have conſumed the offender, had he been within the reach of it; "but the Chevalier, you aſſure us, is a baſtard? there ends our acquaintance—he muſt no more think of coming to my houſe—it is impoſſible to form one's ſociety with men of his deſcription."

"He is, however, well received every where by the women," obſerved the old Dowager.

"Yes," replied the Counteſs, with a ſneer of contempt of *thoſe* women, of which there are but *too* many."

"Oh!" interrupted the preſident, it is always the buſineſs of Plutus to repair the damages occaſioned by the errors of Nature."

The birth of this happy bon mot had the good effect to ſet every body laughing, except Dumount and his pupil, who perhaps did not underſtand it; we ſhould alſo except the Baroneſs, who it was evident enough was burſting with reſentment; yet when ſhe roſe up to leave the company, ſaluting them with infinite complacency, ſhe laſt of all, with great affection, embraced the Counteſs, who returned it with equal, if not greater cordiality.

William caſt on his friend a look that ſpoke his whole ſoul, and again ſaid to himſelf, "this then is the world."

The Baroneſs had hardly made her ſtately perſon inviſible to her friends in the ſaloon,

ſaloon, than Madame d'Egeville addreſſed theſe words to the Abbé—"Ah! Abbé, you are very wicked, or very indiſcreet—certainly you cannot be ignorant that the Baroneſs has long entertained a violent paſſion for the Chevalier."

"I know it well," replied the Abbé, and what I ſaid about him was expreſly to torment her."

"That was extremely charitable in you," retorted the officer, "yet I give you ſome merit, for ſhe deſerved to be mortified."

Every tongue now danced to the tune of ſcandal, and the Baroneſs was cenſured without mercy, until the Abbé having alſo taken his leave, the ridicule of the whole company changed its current, and it was thus that they pulled him to pieces.

"My God!" cried the Officer, "that Abbé is one of the moſt dangerous men in the world."

"Dangerous!" replied Madame d'Egeville, "who is there that does not call him the very peſt of ſociety—falſe—treacherous—and deceitful."

The preſident, who was the next to retire, was the next to fall under their abuſe, conveyed in ſtrains of ſatirical merriment.

"That is a poor inoffenſive *figure*," ſaid the miſtreſs of the houſe, "but he makes one die with laughing at his fine phraſes."

"Charming!"

"Charming!" exclaimed the Officer, "he is a mere *figure* in rhetoric—his pleasantry is confined to puns—and his wit is not worth a farthing."

The reſt of the party as they went away ſuffered in their turns: the officer remained longer than the reſt, but when he was gone the Count ſpoke to his wife after this manner:

"My dear, how often muſt I requeſt of you to forbid that little paltry officer your houſe, who can do nothing but fatigue with his eternal nonſenſe ſuch as have the misfortune to know any thing about him."

"Mighty pretty indeed," retorted the lady; "and ſo, Monſieur le Count, you really expect that I am to quarrel with every body who entertains *me*, and diſpleaſes *you*."

"I wonder you do not hate him."

"I am ſurpriſed you do not think him amiable."

"Amiable!—for what general or particular merit?"

"For the very great one of making himſelf agreeable to my humour."

"A fool!—that is always telling one of his own blunders as matter of entertainment."

"Oh, he dares not ſpeak to me of them; I have formally forbidden him."

"But you will oblige *me* by not receiving him again."

"But

"But—I ſhall oblige myſelf by inviting him to come."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes, indeed and indeed!—pray do not ſuppoſe that I am to be reſtrained like an infant."

"So, ſo, this is a ſecond addition of the ecretary—before I turned away that fop, our officer ſtood no chance—you could ot endure him?"

"The diſmiſſion of the young man you red up with ſo much care from his child- ood, is leſs an inſtance of your wiſdom an inhumanity."

"You muſt allow I ſhewed him a great eal of goodneſs."

"I have ſomething elſe to do than to ouble myſelf with your goodneſs."

"Something elſe, Madame, which I oubt is not quite ſo much to your ho- our."

"What is it, Sir, that you dare to in- nuate?"

"It is quite enough that only you hould underſtand the whole extent of my eaning."

"O yes! you are vaſtly intelligent to e ſure—and ſo delicate in——"

"I will prove to you, Madame, that here was wiſdom in ſending away my ſe- retary—a little villain who had doubly obbed me."

"He

"He robbed! He was incapable of ſuch actions—or if he were capable of them, the blame falls upon yourſelf—you who gave him his education ſhould have taken care of his moral and religious principles, ſo that if evil ariſes from your ſhameful neglect, you are anſwerable for all the ſins he has committed, or ever may commit."

"Part of the puniſhment, according to your own ſyſtem, muſt belong to yourſelf—*you*, Madame, had the condeſcenſion to aſſiſt in forming the boy's mind; and I never heard that you planted in it either honour, honeſty, or *virtue;* but theſe omiſſions have not hindered his being *extremely* grateful to you."

"You are quite right—but for his gratitude I ſhould never have heard of *your* amour with the *little* Roſalie."

"Madame la Counteſs."

"Monſieur le Count."

They were neither of them able to announce more, and both grew ſo furious, that if the young Chevalier, with Mademoiſelle his ſiſter, had not interfered between them, the breach might have been made irreparable: however, by their endeavours, ſomething like a peace was patched up, when each, on being reſtored to a ſmall portion of calmneſs, gave evident ſigns how much they were ſhocked at having

ing expoſed themſelves before two ſtrangers, whoſe manners totally differed from their own, but who were too polite to give offence by going away till the reconciliation was fully eſtabliſhed; by which time, as if nothing had happened to diſturb their compoſure, the Count and Counteſs entreated that Monſieur Dumount would return with his pupil very often to increaſe the charms of their agreeable ſocieties; this they promiſed to do, but without the leaſt intentions of keeping their promiſe.

Being returned to college, and quietly ſeated in their own apartment, "My dear Eléve," ſaid the good Governor, "you have now been in what is called ſociety—pray how do you like it?"

"Not at all—I think it ſo odious that I will, if poſſible, always avoid it."

"Well, well! obſerve I give you no advice on the ſubject; it ſhall not be ſaid that I make you out of love with mankind, and experience will ſpeak ten times more to the purpoſe; I ſhall therefore ſay no more of the fine people we have left behind us, but I would turn your thoughts on the young man who deceived us in the woods of Belleville."

"Ah!" cried William, "what I have heard of that poor youth fills me with ſentiments of compaſſion—how was it poſſible he ſhould be virtuous, brought up in ſuch

a family—frequenting ſo corrupt a circle as that we are come from? Conſider the contagious example of thoſe who ſupplied to him the place of parents, in giving him the neceſſaries of life, whoſe conduct he durſt not inſpect too nicely, much leſs dare to arraign—who has heard nothing of honour—who knows nothing of religion—O dear! dear Dumount! to whom I owe a different education, how was it in the nature of things that this neglected wretch ſhould eſcape contamination?"

"I approve your generous warmth, but muſt correct your ſentiments, that hereafter they may not miſlead you—your vindication is natural, it does honour to your own heart, but it cannot paint with white the villain whoſe vices have already dipped him black—a ſoul that is truly honeſt in all trials, in every ſituation will preſerve its integrity—the man we are ſpeaking of was certainly inclined to vice from his very cradle—he was in himſelf vicious, though perhaps he became ſtill more ſo in that abominable houſe of the Count d'Egeville—when I went there you know it was with no deſign of revealing the crime of his ſecretary; on the contrary, I hoped only to find out, by chance converſation, whether the recital of thoſe diſtreſſes he had made to us were founded in fact, or raiſed in fiction; ſo far our viſit has anſwered,

ſwered, that we are aſſured he has been unfortunate as well as guilty; he could never have poſſeſſed a good heart; yet I will agree with you that in any ſchool leſs abandoned he might have been more worthy."

"I hate," cried William, with vivacity, "I hate the whole family of D'Egevilles."

"Are you ſure that you hate the daughter of that houſe?"

"O worſe, a thouſand times worſe than any of them—what muſt be the daughter of ſuch a mother—affectation, dreſs, and intrigue will fill up all her hours—and diſhonour will be the portion of that man who ſhall call himſelf her huſband."

Dumount ſmiled to hear his own ſentiments clothed in the language of his pupil. "Such," ſaid he, "are the world and its inhabitants—you muſt either, my amiable diſciple, always keep clear of it, or become like thoſe who ſacrifice every thing to make up its imaginary enjoyments."

CHAP. X.

THE LUXEMBOURG.

THE day, on which our hero completed his ſeventeenth year, was inſtituted as a ſort of jubilee to hallow the tranſports of his affectionate governor, who could not look upon him without lifting up his heart to God in thankfulneſs, for having created a being ſo perfect; there was more piety than partiality in theſe emotions; no young man of his age had ſo few faults, ſo many perfections; the former reſulted only from a miſtaken education, and were harmleſs to all but himſelf, who languiſhed under the effects of an habitual gloom, too well cultivated by the precepts and example of his otherwiſe excellent tutor; whilſt the charms of his perſon, the gentleneſs of his diſpoſition, his judgment, his underſtanding, his accompliſhments, operated leſs to his own, than to the gratification of others: all that knew, adored in him thoſe fine qualities of which he alone was inſenſible.

The exulting preceptor, accompanied by his amiable ward, were juſt returned from chapel to receive the compliments of their

their college brotherhood, on William's natal day, when a billet was put into the hands of Dumount, containing theſe words:

" Monſieur, come this evening to the Luxembourg, in the *Allée des Carmes*, where you will have ſomething very intereſting communicated to you—come alone, and at eight o'clock. Sept. 12th, 1746."

The opening of this extraordinary note threw them into a great deal of confuſion—Dumount had no acquaintance—nobody knew him—from whom then could it come?—with what deſign was it ſent?—ſhould he go?—ſuſpicion ſaid, No—fortitude backed by courage, bid him adventure.—William was totally againſt it, except he was permitted to attend him; but the Abbé, ſcrupulouſly delicate, declared he would abide by the injunction laid upon him in the billet; " if it is right," ſaid he, " to obey its contents in part, it is right to comply with them in toto"—it cannot be doubted that his young and cautious friend yielded to this determination with great reluctance; however, to appeaſe his apprehenſions of what miſchief might threaten him from the deſigns of wicked men, he exacted his promiſe, that " whatever the buſineſs of this ſtranger might be, he would ſpeak to him no where but on the terrace;" and the anxiety they both experienced, till the hour of appointment, is

better imagined than deſcribed; as are alſo the tumults of impatience with which, after he was gone, William ſupported his abſence.

Dumount returned about nine with a countenance ſo changed, that William aghaſt, confounded, and diſmayed, could hardly articulate a few disjointed words, to aſk what it was which had alarmed him. Dumount tried to ſpeak, but his voice faultered—he tried to hide his tears, but his eyes would betray them.—"Dear, dear Sir," cried the agitated youth, "what is the matter?—what dreadful calamity has befallen us?"—The old man caught him in his arms, preſſing him with involuntary tenderneſs, as if he would have ſaid, "you are dearer to me than ever."—"Ah! how terrible muſt be our misfortunes," exclaimed William, "when even *you*, you who are ſo good, ſo pious, want reſolution to announce them."

Dumount affected to ſmile—it was but affectation. "How ſoon, dear child, you are diſcompoſed," ſaid he; "what is it I have to tell you?—nothing affecting—nothing very affecting"—trying to vanquiſh his emotions—"your father—that is all!—your father is obliged to quit his reſidence!"—"Ah!" cried William, "then you have ſeen my father!"

"I have;—it was himſelf who ſent for me."

"My

"My God! and what did he ſay to you?—what is the buſineſs that calls him away?—how long will it be before I ſhall again behold his dear, his benign countenance?"

"I do not know either on what account he goes, or how long he may ſtay—do you forget that whatever concerns your father is wrapped up in darkneſs—that his ways are as myſterious as the ways of heaven!"

William wept.—"Ah! tell me every word this revered parent delivered to you."

"I am ready to do it—Dumount," ſaid he, "I am obliged to make a very long journey—take care of my ſon—my poor William!—I confide him to your care—when I come back, reſtore him to me, ſuch as I leave him—wiſe, diſcreet, intelligent, and if it be poſſible, let vivacity be added to the number of his accompliſhments—the occaſion which may, for a very long time, deprive me of his preſence, is indiſpenſable. It will laſt, perhaps——but it is in vain for me to make calculations—whether my abſence be ſhort or long, I ſhall always be mindful of him, and of you—but I chuſe now that he ſhould quit his ſtudies—I deſire that you immediately take him from college, and that you will hide yourſelves from all obſervation, in the moſt obſcure part of Paris, there to

wait my return.—Here your father paused; again he ſpoke, but only to repeat the charges he before had given me; particularly renewing his recommendation of the care he expected me to take of the precious depoſit he entruſted to me: he then gave me money, and commanded me to return home."

"Do you ſee any thing very frightful in all this, my good friend?" Dumount aſked his laſt queſtion, as well as told his ſtory with ſuch an air of perplexity, as made William obſerve his expreſſions wanted that firmneſs which is the teſt of ſterling candour. "Ah! Sir," cried he out, "you kindly diſſimulate, my father abandons me—I have no longer a father."

"Why do you think this of your father—have you deſerved that he ſhould abandon you?—alas! can my amiable pupil humble the friend who loves him, by doubting his veracity—yes, I love you, my ſon! I will never ſeparate myſelf from you—oh, never—never!"

The young man ſaw his beloved governor ſo deeply oppreſſed, that he would aſk him no more queſtions, though convinced there were troubles in ſtore which his tenderneſs would not permit him to unveil—"if it were for my advantage," ſaid he to himſelf, "he would inform me of them; he ſees it for my peace that I ſhould be deceived—ſhall I dare to oppoſe the wiſdom

dom I do not underſtand?—No—I will ſubmit to its dictates."

The very next morning Dumount and his Eléve took their departure from college; the ſame hour they were ſettled in a lodging at the corner of the *Rue St. Victor*, near the king's garden. William could not but obſerve, that their new apartment was neither handſome nor commodious; the Abbé ſaw in his looks a diſſatisfaction which his delicacy would not allow him to expreſs, and made an apology for what was deficient, by ſaying, "they muſt be good managers, during the abſence of his father, who, at ſuch a diſtance, might find it difficult to ſend frequent remittances." William aſked if his father had promiſed to write to them?——"There can be no doubt," replied Dumount, "but that he will let you hear from him—is he not a father?—think you a father will deny himſelf ſo ſw et a conſolation?"

William again ſaw that he was the victim of deception, but he ſaw it with ſilent ſubmiſſion. Their manner of life was now very different from what it had been at college—no Vincent waited on them—no maſters attended them—no delicious viands crowned their board—no heart-cheering wine entered their lips—a woman ſervant did for them all their little *Ménage*—their repaſts chiefly conſiſted of herbs, and their only beverage was water;

yet for all this William ſhewed no tokens of diſcontent; ſometimes, indeed, he would gently expreſs fears that the good Abbé was ſtraitened for money; on which occaſion, the other would ſhew him trifling ſums, pretending they were ſent to him by an unknown conveyance. In this manner paſſed a whole year, which would have appeared extremely tedious, had they been leſs the pupils of philoſophy, or leſs attached to each other—they purſued their ſtudies together; they reaped as much pleaſure as when at college, from their rural excurſions into the country; it was only the aſpect of their affairs that had changed; the face of nature had undergone no revolution; that was always charming, always worthy of exalted contemplation—the royal garden they alſo thought very agreeable, and, at the moſt unfrequented ſeaſons, ſometimes ventured to walk in it—the ſmall wood in the centre—the ſtreams that bordered its banks, in their way to the river—its retired walks—its ruſtic aſpect, all conſpired to make it be conſidered, at leaſt by the lovers of nature, as the moſt charming garden in Paris; but let it be remarked, that it was in 1746 when this preference was beſtowed upon it.

At the commencement of the ſecond year of their ſecluſion, in the *Rue St. Victor*, William began to give way to the moſt furious inquietude; the reaſon of it was this

this—Dumount, from whom he had never before been ſeparated, now went out every day without him, ſo that they hardly ever met but at dinner, or at night; when the old man would redouble his careſſes, and renew the tendereſt profeſſions of eternal friendſhip, but ever charging him to aſk no queſtion of whither he went, or when he would return, ſo that the myſteries that enveloped him at his birth ſeemed every day to accumulate darkneſs, and to become more impenetrable!

The embarraſſment of his governor—the retrenchment of their before *very* ſmall expences—the difference of his dreſs, once that of a gentleman—always decent, now almoſt in rags, and no news of his father—all theſe calamities falling on the head of poor William, flung him into a decline, which promiſed to remove him out of all his troubles; the rapid approach of death he would have welcomed with all his heart, but for the grief of parting with his faithful Dumont—three weeks, night and day, did that indefatigable friend watch by the ſide of his bed, procuring him, nobody knew how, every little indulgence to which he had been accuſtomed, beſides feeding his drooping mind with the balm of hopes, for which there was no foundation, but in his anxiety for the recovery of his precious charge—"all goes well," he would ſay,

ſay, " throw off this indiſpoſition of ſpirit, get ſtrength to bear the good fortune which is coming to you; though it may not be here immediately, believe what I tell you—it is at no great diſtance—you will ſoon get a letter from your father, who loves you with ſuch exquiſite fondneſs, that I ſhall incur his hate, if any thing ſhould happen to you; do not expoſe me to his curſes—live, dear, dear William—live for his—for my—for your own ſake—live, and be happy!"

William, who reſpected the voice of his governor next to that of heaven, was ſo much comforted by theſe flattering converſations, that, in ſpiteof the danger which threatened him, the diſorder took a favourable turn, and in a litttle while he was able to aſſiſt himſelf; yet he now always found Dumount at his ſide, ſtill feeding him with fallacious expectations, that very much aided the perfect eſtabliſhment of his health; but what was his aſtoniſhment, when informed by the woman who made his ſick meſſes, and for which purpoſe came often to his chamber, that very night during the time he was upon the recovery, the Abbé, having firſt ſeen him aſleep, had regularly gone out of the houſe, and not come back till five in the morning, when he went to bed, where he repoſed but a ſhort time before he again preſented himſelf in the chamber of his pupil.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THE DUNGEON.

WILLIAM's impatience, at this ſtrange conduct of his tutor, got the better of his prudence, his reſpect, his moderation; and one day, juſt as he had determined that at their next interview the occaſion of it *ſhould* be explained, the ſame woman who gave him the firſt, brought him a ſecond alarm of much greater magnitude, by ruſhing into his room, and crying out with vehemence of tone and geſture—"Ah! Monſieur, your good preceptor--run—fly—they have carried him to priſon!"

William ſtood aghaſt—"To priſon—to priſon:" echoed he—"my God!" wringing his hands—"my God! what, where, when, who has ſent him to priſon?"—"They ſay, Monſieur," replied the girl weeping, "the dear, kind-hearted gentleman is ſent there for debt!"

"My God!—to priſon, and for debt!" Theſe words he kept on pronouncing without intermiſſion, till, flying on the wings of torture, he arrived at the door of the commiſſioner of that diſtrict in which they reſided, where he was informed, by the magiſtrate,

magiſtrate, that his governor had been arreſted, on a note of hand, for a hundred and twenty livres." He ruſhed out, from the preſence of the judge, with even greater precipitation than he had entered—his feet ſcarce touched the ground as they bore him to the outſide of that dungeon where his friend was confined, with a frantic air, irreſiſtible to the keepers, he commanded to have the door thrown open; but what became of him when he ſaw this beloved, this venerable man, pale, languid—laying ſtretched on a ragged mat, in an obſcure hole, lighted only by a ſmall grate—"Ah!" cried he, caſting himſelf on the boſom of the old man, who ſtretched out his ſhackled arms to embrace him, "ah! my father—my dear Dumount, is *this* the felicity you made me expect—to ſee you thus—to ſee you in chains! and for me—yes, my ſoul tells me that it is I—I, who have forged them for you—remove, oh! remove the veil which has ſo long obſcured my condition; put an end to the reſerve that has, of late, ſo miſerably tortured me, or arm yourſelf with ſtoic fortitude to ſee me die at your feet!"

"You muſt not die; I cannot bear *that*," ſaid the old man, ſobbing—"henceforward I caſt away all concealments—yes, my child, my dear child, I will tell you every thing—but talk no more of dying; I repeat to you I cannot bear that—rather than

than ſink to the grave like cowards, let us live nobly to combat with our misfortunes! He who inflicts, is able to ſupport us under them."

William ſat down on the ground beſide him; he held one of his hands, which ſometimes he preſſed to his lips, ſometimes to his heart, whilſt Dumount continued ſpeaking:

"It is no longer in my power to hold you in eaſy ignorance—know all—learn every thing, and grieve more for your own fate than for mine." When I went to the Luxembourg, as I had been ordered, I perceived, in the *Allé des Carmes*, a man meaſuring the path towards me with immoderate paces—I looked, I ſuſpected, I was convinced it was your father—"Dumount," ſaid he, his voice ſcarcely audible, "Dumount, it is done; I muſt abandon!" "Who, Monſieur," cried I, interrupting him, "whom is it that you muſt abandon? ſay not that it is my William—ſay not that it is your ſon that you threaten to abandon!" "William," ſaid he, "I am forced to renounce—yet William is not my ſon."—"Not your ſon!" I exclaimed.—"No, he replied; without being mine, he is the original of my misfortunes; and thoſe of a perſon at once the moſt charming, the moſt perfidious!"—"Ah! Monſieur, you will certainly ſee this amiable, this worthy child once more—behold him once, for one moment,

ment, though the next you ſhould caſt him from your arms for ever."—"Never, never," ſaid he, "what you aſk, I never will grant—if you knew me better, you would pity me more than you now do him. Dear Dumount, adviſe him immediately to enter on ſome buſineſs, by which he may ſupport his wretched exiſtence: the burden of him to me is intolerable; caution him to be ſilent on his birth, it will coſt him his life to reveal it."—"I caſt myſelf at the feet of this auſtere, this cruel man; I no longer call him your father; he diſclaimed the title that would be ſo glorious to him. I clung to his knees, I deluged them with my tears—oh! with what energy did I try to move his compaſſion for you; but what were his vague replies?"—"He is not my ſon—oh! what is it for which I grieve! Dumount, if you knew—but I cannot—adieu! think not of me; think only of yourſelf—I bid you not to beſtow a thought on me—I am not the father of your boy; but my fate is ſo horrible, that I carry contagion for all who approach me"—ſuddenly he put into my hands a ſmall purſe, and fled from me.

"But he is my father," cried William, "my heart tells me that he is indeed my father—ſad, ſad truth—he is cruel!—who then is merciful? Oh! my kind, my venerable preceptor, that humanity, which ſhould

ſhould ſoften the whole world, lodges in thy feeling heart, and leaves all the reſt of mankind deſtitute! but why is it I have the affliction to behold that body, which contains a ſoul ſo feeling, fettered in bonds!"

"The ſmall ſum I received from the man whom you perſiſt in calling your father, and who, I am perſuaded is ſo in reality, the very little money he gave me at our laſt interview, with all the management I could uſe, laſted us but a ſhort time; I then, unknown to you, procured a few ſcholars, and thoſe I daily attended, which occaſioned my frequent long abſences from home—you were very good—you aſked me no queſtions, but I read in your eyes the anxiety my conduct coſt you, yet I could find you bread, poor as it was, by no other means, which made me boldly purſue it. I had but few pupils, ſome of them never paid me, and in the height of my diſtreſs, you were taken ſick; a thouſand things that I could not procure you, were neceſſary to your preſervation; I borrowed of an uſurer the ſum for which I am now under confinement; my cloſe attendance on you, in the time of your ſickneſs, loſt me the few ſcholars I had before; they ſaid, I had neglected them, and would receive me no longer; neceſſity urged me to undertake a laborious buſineſs, which

pleaſed

pleaſed me the better for occupying only my hours of reſt, and leaving me thoſe of the day to paſs in your chamber; alas! my work, though hard, was not profitable; I could not pay my ſteel-hearted creditor, and you ſee what he has done to me! Beloved charge—moſt amiable of children—what muſt be thy fate? oh, thou, who haſt neither parent nor friend, what will become of thee?"

Inſtead of anſwering the old man, William ſtarted on his feet, and ran out of the dungeon; but, before Dumount could in any manner account for his ſudden diſappearance, he ſaw him re-enter, his handſome countenance brightened by animation; he fell on the neck of his tutor, whilſt the keeper of the priſon was buſy in relieving him from his fetters. "Deareſt of friends," cried the tranſported youth, "perfect model of divine goodneſs, ſubmit that I ſhould take off theſe chains with which my misfortunes have bound you—your debt is diſcharged, and you are at liberty."

"But how are they diſcharged?—by what means have you diſcharged them?"

"Honeſtly."

"Your watch?"

"It is gone."

"I am ſorry for it," William, "I am very ſorry."

"Do

"Do you envy me the only felicity I have known from my birth, to this exquiſite moment, in which I bring you freedom."

"Alas! that watch ſo dear to you—the gift of"—he looked at the man who was aſſiſting him, and ſtopped—

"Oh! thou to *me*, the beſt, the tendereſt of fathers!" cried the exemplary youth, "ſpeak no more of the watch; had its price been ſhort of your ranſom, I would have ſold myſelf to have redeemed you! I never knew the value of this precious toy till now—I ſhall never regret the having diſpoſed of it—what a world of happineſs has it purchaſed me." He ſpoke no more than he felt; he had never been ſo happy before: as to Dumount, it is impoſſible to deſcribe the exultation of his heart; not ſo much for his own liberation, as for the noble diſplay of principle which he had witneſſed in his beloved, his glorious pupil!

Thus reſtored to each other, arm in arm they walked back to their poor little lodgings, where they were received with ſo much joy, by their only dependant, as ſhewed, whatever ſhe might think of their poverty, ſhe knew how to eſtimate their virtues—ſhe congratulates them a thouſand times—ſhe flies to prepare for them their favourite, yet frugal ſoup; but ſhe wonders,

ders, in her own mind, how it is poſſible they ſhould look ſo cheerful, and appear ſo contented, as if the air of a priſon had enlivened rather than oppreſſed them.—It muſt have been a mind more delicate than her own that could have ſolved this enigma.

Their repaſt being over, William laid down a purſe upon the table, in which was ten *louis*, the large overplus of what had been paid him for his watch, and aſked the Abbé, with a ſmiling air, what they ſhould do to increaſe their little capital? "For my part," added he, "I think we cannot do better than to make that knowledge I have gained at college uſeful to our neceſſities. I really wiſh, very much, to try what my talents will produce."

"In you, my child," ſaid the old man, "this condeſcenſion is *real* dignity, and I ſhall not oppoſe it—what is the line in which you wiſh to embark?"

But as we are got out of the dungeon, it is time we ſhould conclude this chapter, and reſerve William's anſwer for the next.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

THE ALARM.

"I SHOULD like," ſaid William, "to give leſſons in muſic—it is a liberal art, and a gentleman may teach it without diſgracing himſelf."

"But have you conſidered, my dear Eléve, that if you make this election, you muſt be ſubject to the caprices, the haughtineſs, the ill-humour of all the dunces you may happen to inſtruct—thoſe who are deficient in genius are ſure to accuſe the maſter for their own want of it; they think him anſwerable for their ſtupidity, becauſe he receives their money. It is thus they will ſpeak to you.—'But, Sir, here are ſo many months paſſed in which I have learnt nothing—the Counteſs de ———, Madame ———, and the Marchioneſs de ———, are all excellent muſicians; they have been under your tuition not much longer than myſelf: all this is mighty odd, and I aſſure Mr. What-d'ye-call'em there is no accounting why it ſhould be ſo.' Ah! amiable William! you will have great occaſion for all the patience, all the gentleneſs you poſſeſs, to ſupport you under ſo many

many mortifications as you muſt encounter from pride and ignorance. I am grieved you ſhould be ſubject to them—yet the reſource is an honeſt one—I have nothing to ſay againſt it—it is worthy of your education, and it will be profitable." Here ended the conference; the afternoon was remarkably fine, and they went out to enjoy it in the king's garden.

They had juſt entered a retired walk when a venerable old man paſſed by them, attended by one of about thirty, whoſe countenance was gloomy and furious; he caſt on them a piercing look of examination, and exclaimed, "It is him—my father—there—oh! it muſt be himſelf—he has every feature of the Marquis."

"Are you ſure it is he?" replied the old man.

"Quite certain," ſaid the other, lowering his voice; "him we have ſo long been ſeeking is at laſt found, and he ſhall die."

Dumount, and his young friend, heard no more of their diſcourſe; the ſtrangers were gone, but they had heard enough to petrify them with aſtoniſhment at a menace ſo extraordinary.

"Ah! my father! my father! we ſhall ſoon be ſeparated," cried William; "behold my fate is accompliſhed."

"Suppoſe it not, my child; however this adventure may ſurpriſe us, what great danger

danger does it threaten—theſe tygers dare not kill you—they dare not come under our roof to cut your throat, and we will no more meet them in this garden."

Notwithſtanding the Abbé pretended ſo much compoſure, he was in fact even more agitated than William himſelf; they haſtened home with all imaginable ſpeed, and ſhutting themſelves up, ſpent ſome hours in forming projects how to eſcape the toils that were ſet for them: it was near midnight before they had determined by what mode to ſecure their ſafety; at laſt it was ſettled, that immediate flight from Paris would be the ſureſt—in conſequence of this arrangement Dumount, with the purſe in his hand, went to the bedſide of his hoſt and hoſteſs, when having fully ſatisfied all their demands, he put it again into his pocket, and returned back to the room where he had left William, to hurry him out of the houſe as ſoon as he could; but as they were each folding up a ſmall parcel of linen to take with them, their ſenſes were almoſt put to flight by a loud and obſtinate knocking at the ſtreet door—the man of the houſe, who heard it as well as themſelves, was running out of his chamber to open it, but William prevented him, whilſt Dumount went to the window, and, calling from thence, aſked who it was that diſturbed them at an hour ſo unſeaſonable,

and

and what buſineſs warranted the intruſion?

"Let me in," ſaid a voice, which had nothing of treachery in it—I am the meſſenger of one you ought to reſpect."

"Great God!" cried William, "if it ſhould be from my father—if he ſhould have relented—ah! let him in—let him in, I beſeech you, though I ſhould pay for this raſhneſs with my life."

Dumount, who had imbibed the ſame glimmering ray of hope that inſpired his pupil, did not heſitate a moment, but went himſelf to the door, and threw it open with the boldneſs of an innocent man, who, though he will not trifle with life, can at all times meet death with compoſure: a ſervant entered, who delivered him a letter, reſpectfully adding, quickly, gentlemen, read the happy ſummons—loſe no time, but come with me.

William had caſt his eyes on the direction—he ſaw it was in the hand of his father—he ſhouted with joy; but in his eagerneſs to tear it open, had nearly demoliſhed its contents: the words were theſe:

BILLET.

"Imprudent William, your father would yet ſave your life, when you perhaps, will occaſion to him the loſs of his own—fly with my faithful domeſtic—come to me at Valence;

Valence; and you, Monſieur Dumount, do not you abandon your pupil, I have urgent occaſions for you—come with him: no parleying—no indeciſion—come inſtantly, or where is the ſtrength that can ſave you from deſtruction."

CHAP. XIII.

THE INN AT VALENCE.

THIS letter, which it was impoſſible could be a forgery, produced its full effect; they neither demurred, or were undecided; but bidding the ſervant, who came expreſs, to ſhew them what road they were to take, they followed him out of the houſe, almoſt without ſpeaking to each other. He conducted them with quick ſteps to the *boulevard neuf*, where a poſt-chaiſe waited, into which they entered with the ſame confidence and ſpirit as before they had teſtified on quitting their lodging in the rue St. Victor—they ſoon found themſelves on the road to *Montargis*, and the driver conveyed them along with ſo much ſwiftneſs, that at break of day he brought them to *Nemours*.

After their firſt emotions, which were made up of ſurpriſe, joy, and apprehenſion, had a little ſubſided; when they were ſtill ſuſpending between hopes and fears; when ſilence began to give place to expreſſion—"What," cried William, "can my father mean by the epithet of *imprudent*, which

he affixes to me—ah! Dumount! you who can anſwer for my conduct, will you not tell him I have never been imprudent—alas! ſomebody muſt have deceived him—he ſays too I ſhall be the cauſe of ſhortening his days. My God! all theſe accuſations are very—very terrible."

"They are indeed," ſaid Dumount; "but take courage, my child—depend firſt on God, next on your own integrity; and rejoice, at all events, that your father no longer diſowns you."

During their drive they aſked the ſervant, who attended them both as guide and guard, ſeveral queſtions, which he civilly excuſed himſelf from anſwering, and in a manner that made them perceive his maſter had commanded him to be ſilent.

A few ſmall difficulties impeded the progreſs of their journey, ſo that they did not reach Valence till the tenth day, about eight o'clock in the evening. The ſervant who conducted them to a very handſome hotel, aſked if the gentleman was yet arrived?—The poſtillion, of whom he inquired, ſaid, "No.—But," added he, "I met him at Lyons—you know it is only one poſt, ſo that he will be here either this night, or early to-morrow morning." They durſt only ſay to the ſervant, "Is it your maſter for whom you inquire?" Re-

ſpectfully taking off his hat, he anſwered "Yes!" and conducted them to an elegant apartment, where having refreſhed themſelves they retired to reſt, being half dead with the fatigues of ſo long a journey.

It was four in the morning when they were awakened from a ſound ſleep by the rattling of a carriage, which ran with velocity over the pavement till it ſtopped at the door of the inn.

"He is come," cried William, ſtarting up in his bed, trembling all over—"It is he—it is my father." At the ſame inſtant that cruel father entered the chamber—William made a motion, as if he would ump out of the bed to caſt himſelf at his feet; but with a look that rendered him immoveable—"Stay where you are," ſaid he, "I neither want your duty, nor will accept it."

William groaned—the groan was echoed by Dumount.

"You are not my ſon, Monſieur; how often ſhall I repeat it to you—I am not your father—the veil is dropped—you made my misfortunes—you have now finiſhed them—get up both of you, and attend me in the next chamber." He went away, leaving them to do as he commanded.

Dumount, though ſcarcely leſs affected than William, aſſiſted him, without ſpeaking,

ing, to put on his garb of poverty; he as ſilently permitted his officious kindneſs; he could not help himſelf, his joints were ſtiffened with horror, and his eyes blinded by ſorrow; neither of them ſpoke, becauſe each knew that his voice was not to be truſted. Having thrown his clothes about William, the old man took him tenderly by the arm, and ſupported him to the awful preſence, not of a kind father, but a ſevere tyrant, their paſſage to him might have been tracked by their tears.

He ſaid to William, repulſing him as he would have knelt before him—"Have I not told you, young man, that I have no claims upon you—that dear error which has coſt me ſo much, is done away—it is no longer your friend—it no longer pleads for you—and I now ſee you, for the laſt time, to ſwear by Heaven and Earth, that from this hour I caſt you from my protection—that I caſt you from my thoughts, if it be poſſible—that I abandon you to your fate—that I have done with you for ever."

William heard this dreadful denunciation, but not diſtinctly; his hearing, his ſight, his ſtrength, all forſook him—his colour fled—he was ſick at heart—his knees ſmote againſt each other—he claſped his hands together—he caſt up his eyes to Heaven—he tottered—he groaned—and he fell. It

It was a long time before William recovered his ſenſes—he ſaw himſelf ſurrounded by ſtrangers—no father to terrify—no Dumount to ſooth him—every face was new to him—he looked round for thoſe he wanted to ſee, but he ſaw them no where—he called upon them with the voice of inſanity, until it was quite loſt in hoarſeneſs: one of the many who aſſiduouſly aided to reſtore him imprudently told him that the gentlemen, for whom he inquired, had left Valence together, and were expected to return there no more. He was even leſs prepared for this ſecond ſhock on his ſenſibility than he had been for the firſt, having leſs ſtrength of mind or body to ſupport him under it, and he relapſed into his former ſtate of death-like inaction—the people of the houſe compaſſionately lifted him on the bed, and ſeated themſelves round him, expecting to receive his laſt ſighs; but though he neither moved, nor ſeemed to breathe, yet in fact he was not inſenſible to the lamentations they uttered over him.

"Dear child," cried an old woman, as ſhe wiped away the tears that rolled down her cheeks with the back of her hand—"thou art indeed a poor little lamb led to the ſlaughter, and the devil will ſurely have the butchers who ſend thee to Heaven."

"Ah!

"Ah! barbarians!" ſaid another, "what a pity ſo handſome a youth ſhould be abandoned by his own father—by his preceptor too, who no longer ago than laſt night ſeemed to worſhip the very ground he trod on."

"Ah!" obſerved a third, "they have been gone two hours, yet it hardly ſeems a minute ſince the chaiſe drove away with them at ſuch a mad rate! if my prayers are heard, they will have their necks broken before they get to the end of their journey."

"Yes," cried the landlord, "a curſe muſt attend ſuch cruelty, to leave him upon ſtrangers, and never ſo much as to ſay take care of him."

William ſighed deeply—they all ſtarted up as if his ghoſt had appeared to them—they believed him paſt all aſſiſtance, but now ſome ran one way, ſome another, to bring him reſtoratives, and adminiſtered to him with ſo much eager humanity, that as ſoon as he was able to ſpeak he tried to make them his acknowledgments.

"Exert yourſelf, Monſieur," ſaid the maſter of the inn; "I am heartily glad to ſee you once more on this ſide of eternity—ſuppoſe theſe bad men have left you without money, never mind it, you ſhall live with me—I ſhall take care that you do not want neceſſaries—you muſt not think of

the difference between my houſe and that of Monſieur, your father's. I ſhall love you extremely well—yet there are no indulgences ſo ſweet as thoſe one receive under the paternal roof.

Every word he uttered pierced William to the ſoul—he ſqueezed the hand that would have fed him—he embraced the arms that would have protected him, but he would be a burden to no man; and the firſt moment he found himſelf freed from the kind, but oppreſſing importunities of his new friends, unobſerved by any body, he takes up his little baggage, and paſſes through the gates of Valence, where we firſt pointed him out to the obſervation of our reader, to whoſe judgment we then made a reference, and who by this time muſt have decided on the complication of his deſtiny. Let us follow his footſteps to ſee what more will befal him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

WILLIAM, no longer able to diſcern the citadel of Valence, or the ſtately cloiſters of its venerable abbey, which had all gradually ſunk away from his aching ſight, ſtruck into the firſt ſolitary road that offered itſelf to his penſive ſteps, and led him ignorant of his route to the borders of *Iſere;* he purſued the path of theſe waters, which widen as they approach *Dauphiné*; there he turned a little to the left of *Romans*, and found himſelf in a vaſt plain, with the worſt companions in the world—can the miſerable have any worſe than their own reflections?

Fatigue invited him to repoſe—he ſat down at the foot of a tree, but ſleep he could not—his thoughts were all employed in ſearching for the motive which influenced his father and Dumount to abandon him. The day began to decline—a faint light was only perceptible—the laſt rays of the ſun trembling on the face of nature, announced the approach of night—all creation appeared to be wrapped in tranquillity, except William, whoſe

mind was reſtleſs even to tumult—he laid himſelf on the graſs—his face reſted on his hands—his long luxuriant hair floated in the winds—he opened his large blue eyes, but to weep—he opened his mouth, but to utter groans and lamentations.

"My father," cried he, "once ſo kind, now ſo cruel—what have I done to incur your hatred?—how often have you preſſed me to your heart—called me your ſon—your William—your beloved William—dear delicious moments, are ye gone, never—never to return.—No, never will his arms open to me again—never—never more ſhall my eyes meet his—he diſowns me—I am thrown off by my father—I remain alone in the univerſe——O God! and you *too* Dumount—*you* alſo have caſt me from your heart—*you* too have abandoned the youth you once loved—him who you ſo long, ſo tenderly cheriſhed—was it neceſſary your conduct, as well as your leſſons, ſhould teach me that *all* men are inhuman—*all*, all treacherous, wicked and unjuſt—for thy ſake Dumount, ſince thou, *thou* art unfaithful, I will fly from mankind—I deteſt—I abhor them. O Heaven direct me to ſome lonely foreſt, inhabited by ſavages, whoſe very inſtinct will teach them that pity for my woes which is denied me in ſociety. I will paſs my days in a retreat, unknown to the reſt of the world; invoking the Supreme, by inceſſant

inceſſant prayer, to re-eſtabliſh the calm of my ſoul—I would aſk, that I might think no more of my father's malediction, or of my friend's treaſon."

Thus ſpoke the amiable, the intereſting William—his ideas contracted—his head confuſed—his ſpirits plunged in chagrin—his heart overcharged with affliction—he knew little or nothing of men; thoſe he beſt knew had deceived, had inſulted, had forſaken him: he would therefore live by himſelf—he would make no exceptions in favour of any man—he would regard all men as monſters. Thaſe opinions were the fruits of his education, perhaps of his misfortunes; his heart did not produce them; the ſoil was much too grateful; it was capable of ripening to perfection all the generoſity, as well as all the virtues of humanity.

All the time that William was making his lamentations, a beautiful young boy, leaning againſt the tree under which he had thrown himſelf, liſtened, unſeen, to his moving complaints, and cried out, juſt as he had ended them, "Alas! poor Monſieur, what is the matter with you?"

William ſtarting up, demanded the motive of a curioſity which offended him.

The child looked in his face with undeſcribable ſoftneſs—"Why ſhould you be angry," ſaid he; "are you not very unfortunate?"

"What

"What if I am."

"I want to know who are the wicked men that have uſed you ſo ill?"

"It ſignifies nothing to you."

"Oh! you would not be ſo paſſionate if you knew me."

"Who are you, then?"

"One that can do you no harm—but how do you like me?"

"If you was not a boy, and will in time be a man, I ſhould think you amiable—yes, charming—but as a man I muſt hate, abhor, and deteſt you."

"Oh! it is only my dreſs that cauſes your error—I am a little harmleſs girl, my name is Marienna; my father, Germain, and I, live two leagues from hence, in a very pleaſant foreſt—that is our ſervant, Germain, who you ſee watching our horſe whilſt it crops a little graſs to refreſh itſelf."

His father—Dumount—his misfortunes were all forgotten, whilſt he contemplated the charms and the graces of this enchanting wood nymph. Ah! how different the firſt-ſight ſenſations he felt for this child of nature, to thoſe he experienced for Mademoiſelle d'Egeville, with all her accompliſhed arts. "Beautiful Marienna," he exclaimed, "what can have induced your father to hide ſuch treaſures in a foreſt?" "That," replied ſhe, "is his ſecret—if he had

had given it me in keeping, I would tell it you with all my heart, for I think you are very honeſt," ſighing, "becauſe you are ſo handſome—my father, no doubt, will tell you himſelf."

"How ſhall I ever ſee your father?"

"Ah! you will ſee him every day, when you come to live with us."

"Live with you, divine creature!—do you invite me to live with you?"

"To be ſure I do; can you think I have already forgotten when I heard you call out to God that he would find you a foreſt to dwell in? No; I thought, at that very moment, you ſhould go home with us---my father will conſole him." Said I to myſelf, "And ſo will I, if he will let me?"

"Ah! Marienna, how touching is the ſound of your voice—how ſweet are your words—how gentle the expreſſion of your eyes!"

"I am very glad they pleaſe you, my poor Monſieur."

"Have you been brought up always in the foreſt?"

"We have lived there ſix years."

"How old are you, adorable Marienna?"

"Germain ſays I am fifteen and a bit—Germain is a very good man, but not ſo genteel as yourſelf."

"How entertaining—how beautiful you are!"

"Yes,

"Yes, my father and Germain often tell me that I am very pretty; I am quite rejoiced that you ſhould think as they do."

"What innocence—what ſimplicity! I have then, at laſt, met with one ſincere ſoul on whom I can depend; but ſhe is not of the world—ſhe has been educated in a foreſt."

"That is juſt like my father; oh! he will doat upon you—give me your hand, and come with me."

It would be unnatural to ſuppoſe he rejected the ſoft white hand ſhe extended to him; yet, as he tenderly preſſed it in his own, "Are you ſure," ſaid he, "your father will receive me?"

"Very ſure—I have ſeen you, that is ſufficient; beſides he loves every body who is unfortunate, becauſe he has been unfortunate himſelf; ſo come along."

William, according to the ſyſtem in which he had been but too well inſtructed, on the firſt view of Marienna in boy's clothes, put himſelf very much upon his guard; but what became of his ſuſpicious caution when ſhe called herſelf a girl? when his eyes informed him ſhe was the moſt beautiful, and his ears convinced him ſhe was alſo the moſt candid, the moſt innocent of her ſex; if idolatry had been no crime, he would have paid her divine homage.

Marienna's

Marienna's features were not only beautiful, but the ſoul of beauty they were compoſed in, the ſparkling expreſſion of ſenſibility, and thoſe lips, which had never yielded but to the touch of a father's, ſeemingly divided to utter the pure dictates of unadulterated nature; conceived in innocence, and delivered in the language of modeſty.—A thouſand times did William, as he ſtood gazing on her, repeat to himſelf—"How charming ſhe is—what teeth—what eyes—what hair!" William was in the right of it not to paſs over her hair, it was of a light aſh colour, and the fineſt in the world, except his own; with its natural ringlets it formed a covering for her elegant ſhoulders, and flowed negligently to the termination of her ſlender waiſt; her dreſs, though intended to be maſculine, had preſerved enough of the feminine to render it extremely ſoft and becoming, the veſt being open at the collar, and her lovely boſom only concealed by many folds of fine muſlin that, by reflection, added to the ſnowy whiteneſs of her ſkin.

William would never have tired in gazing, or Marienna in liſtening to the ecſtaſies of William; again ſhe invited him, with a natural and affectionate air, to go with her; ſhe paſſed one of her arms through his, would have dragged him towards Germain, but Germain approached them with no very flattering aſpect, having

ing obſerved the motions of theſe young people from the beginning of the converſation.

Marienna felt confuſed, ſhe did not know why, when this old and favourite ſervant of her father aſked William from whence he came—whither he was going---and what he wanted with the young perſon to whom he had been talking ſo long?

"Long," replied William; "do you call it long, Monſieur? I have not ſeen her more than a minute!"

"Her—ſo ſhe has told you then that ſhe is a girl."—"Ah! Marienna, Marienna, what will your father ſay to this?"

"Why what have I done, Germain? have not my father and you told me, a hundred times, that I ſhall always tell the truth, and never fear to ſpeak what I think? beſides, my dear good Germain, you cannot think how kind, how virtuous, how innocent, and, alas! how unhappy he is; I am ſure he did not know that I heard him, when he talked, and wept, and wrung his hands!—Oh, my God! how my heart felt for him; but we ſhall take him to my father, and he, and you, and I, will all try to comfort him."

"Young man, who are you?" aſked the old ſervant, ſternly.

"I am nobody—I am nothing—I have no quality to diſtinguiſh me, except that I have the misfortune to be a man."

"Ah!

"Ah! how moving are his expreſſions," cried Marienna.

"Of what country?" aſked Germain.

"I know only that I am a citizen of the world."

"What is the name of your father?"

"Of that too I am ignorant."

"Are you acquainted with his rank?"

"No."

"Is this poſſible that he, who has a father, ſhould neither know his name, place of abode, nor his ſituation in the rank of ſociety?"

"Am I to blame if he has concealed all theſe things from me?--am I to ſuffer in the opinion of others, becauſe, without being guilty of any crime, he has abandoned and forſaken me?"—Marienna touched his arm, "You ſhould not ſay that," whiſpered ſhe. But his ſoul was too noble to admit of a ſubterfuge, even at the inſtigation of her who had taught him his firſt leſſon in the delicious language of love; he therefore continued his diſcourſe, ſtill addreſſing himſelf to the old man, who ſeemed rather the guardian than the ſervant of his innocent little miſtreſs.—"Think not, Sir, I beſeech you, that I am either an impoſtor, or mad; but liſten to me, whilſt I tell you all that I know of my wretched deſtiny!—I have been educated in a college at Paris; I have ſeen there a man, who

who I believe of no mean condition; he ſupported me in a ſtile of grandeur; he called me his ſon—I loved him tenderly—I verily thought him to be my father—he has this day, without any fault of mine, caſt me from his arms, renounced, and abandoned me; I am henceforth a wanderer; and, if you reject me, I will form no other intercourſe with mankind."

"Imprudent Marienna," ſaid the old man, "I hope you have not promiſed him the protection of your father?"—In theſe few words William felt his hopes all blaſted, and fled from them with precipitation, caſting a look of anguiſh on Marienna that rooted itſelf in her heart for ever.—"Cruel, cruel Germain," cried ſhe, "you have driven him from us—ſee how he flies."—"Oh! poor Monſieur—poor, poor, unfortunate, amiable youth, I ſhall love you as long as I live, and I never, never will forget you."—"May heaven forgive *you*, Germain, but *I* never ſhall."

William, with his head running on the inſult he fancied he had received from Germain, and his heart filled by the image of Marienna, wandered about all night, without knowing what path he had taken; nor did the dawn of a bright morning afford him the leaſt relief; he was ſtill on the large plain, but in what part of it was to him a matter of indifference; he ſtill

continued

continued walking, or rather flying, like the timid hare before the hunter, fearful to make one ſtep, even to recover its panting breath, leſt the terrible hounds ſhould overtake it. William had no purſuers; his greateſt enemies he carried in his boſom; they ſpoke to him only of the cruelty, the perfidy of man; of the loſt, the lovely Marienna; and of his own irreparable woes! By and by his ears are aſſaulted with diſtant cries—they approach nearer to him—he diſtinctly hears theſe words:—"Father, Germain—dear ſtranger—will none of you come to ſave the poor Marienna?" William ſprang forward; what a ſcene preſented itſelf—it was the beautiful Marienna, covered with blood, in the hands of a robber, who ſtrove to drag her along.—"Ruffian," exclaimed our hero, ſnatching her from his ſide, without conſidering the danger to which he expoſed himſelf, "Is it thus that thou uſeſt a defenceleſs woman?" The villain drew out a piſtol, and would have anſwered him with the contents, but our hero tore it from his trembling graſp, levelled it at his head, and laid him dead at his feet. The young people, no doubt, would have ſaid a thouſand tender things to each other, if humanity had not ſuperceded love—deep, heavy groans iſſued from no diſtant ſpot—Marienna cried out, "You have ſaved me, let us fly to ſave the

good

good Germain—Ah! ah! Germain will die; they have wounded him to death!" They were at the old man's ſide in a moment, who laid, ſtretched on the ground, bleeding, and in agonies!

Marienna threw herſelf down by him, her arms entwined his neck—"Oh! my dear Germain," cried ſhe, "you muſt not die—here I am—open your eyes, behold I am ſafe—indeed I am—but ſee who has ſaved me? ſee who it is that is binding up your poor wounds?—Oh, my God! you will love him now—yes, you will carry him with us to my father.—If you do but get well, my good Germain, I know I ſhall never be ſorry for this terrible accident."

"Bleſſed be the bounty of God!" cried Germain.

"Ah! but Germain, what do you ſay to our defender?"

"Next to God I will love and ſerve him. Generous, amiable youth," he continued, "agent of heaven; it is thou then—thou, who ſaveſt a father from diſtraction—ſaveſt me from death—ſaveſt this darling child from diſhonour—I die, if thou doſt not pardon my late inhumanity."

"Live, venerable man," replied William, "and let us reap the fruit of my ſervices, your friendſhip, as I ſhall prove myſelf deſerving of it."

"I promiſe

"I promiſe to be your friend, without reſtrictions; who ſhall ever preſume to doubt thy noble ſpirit?—Give me thy hand?—my ſoul has been more wounded than my body, in reſtoring to me my young miſtreſs inviolate; you have cured the one, the other is but a contuſion on my ſhoulder; bind it up tight with your handkerchiefs, and it will find its own remedy in the blood it has emitted; then ſet me upon the horſe, and I am yet ſtrong enough to conduct you to the arms of a virtuous father, who will acknowledge in you the deliverer of his precious daughter, and love you, as I do, for her ſake."

The two young people, delighted with their office, did every thing he commanded; and having, with ſome difficulty, put him on horſeback, Marienna mounted behind to keep him ſteady.

William, as he walked by their ſide, felt himſelf no longer unhappy—he could ſee Marienna——he could catch her ſmiling glances as ſhe threw them baſhfully towards him—he could hear the ſound of her muſical voice; in ſhort, he could adore her without fear of offending any body—ſhe accounted to him for the extraordinary ſcene in which he found them engaged, by ſaying, "that, after he had ran away from them, they had loſt their road, no doubt," ſhe added, "for a puniſhment that they had

had not taken him with them: In this diſagreeable dilemma they had wandered about all night, when juſt as they were beginning to diſtinguiſh, at break of day that they were not far from Romans, the villain aſſaulted them; when Germain, in hopes to move his compaſſion, told him Marienna was a girl, begging he would turn away the piſtols from her ſight; upon which he felt himſelf wounded by the diſcharge of one of them; and, at the ſame moment that he fell, he had the torture to behold Marienna drawn from his ſide, and dragged from his ſight!"

Stopping at the pretty village of Marcellin, our three travellers reſted long enough to get Germain's wounds dreſſed by a ſurgeon; afterwards they proceeded, with additional ſpirit, for the houſe of Marienna's father, whoſe name was Villeroy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE FOREST—THE FORTRESS—AND THE FATHER.

WHEN they entered the gloomy foreſt of *Chamboran*, William's heart began to fail him a little—to part *now* with Marienna, oh! the thought was inſupportable—and how did he know but her father might give him as cold a reception as Germain had done before in the plain of Romans—the bare poſſibility of ſuch a misfortune drew ſo deep a ſigh from the bottom of his heart as made Marienna ſeek for its origin, and finding it in his timidity, ſhe got Germain of her party, both together uſing ſuch cordial expreſſions as gave him new courage.

This foreſt, where ſtood the habitation of Villeroy, was ſituated between St. Marcellin, St. Etienne, and Romans, being full ten leagues in circumference, more celebrated for robbers, and precipices, than for the few charms Nature had beſtowed upon its decorations—to all the world it was an object of ſo much terror, that it was ſuppoſed whoever entered it muſt be endowed with celeſtial courage—nothing,

in

in fact, could be equally tremendous. William thought so as he cast up his sight upon the huge trees, that bending with age threatened to fall and crush those who should be under them; when he saw that the radiance of the sun could not penetrate through their massy boughs, and heard the unceasing murmurs, or rather growling of the winds, which eternally collected and discharged themselves amongst their branches.

In the midst of this terrific scene of horrors was situated the house of Villeroy, but in a little glen or valley much more favourable, which, however, was not perceived by William till they came close upon it—this house seemed to represent a sort of fortress—Marienne smiled to see William's astonishment.

"There," said she, "there is our charming habitation—and there too is my dear, dear father walking on the wall—ah! he is looking out for his poor Marienna I dare say, and little thinks who I am bringing with me."

Marienna was perfectly right—Villeroy, alarmed at their absence, had not been in bed the whole night, and watched from the first dawn of morning, pacing up and down in hopes he should see them returning—he saw them stop at the drawbridge, for the house was surrounded by a moat filled with

with water—he uttered a cry of joy—he was infirm, yet he forgot his infirmities—he forgot his age—he even forgot his cane, and walked briſkly to let down the drawbridge, being ſo conſtructed that he could do it with his ſingle arm.

How charming, how venerable was the figure of this intereſting old recluſe—how beautiful the contraſt, when the young, the lovely, the enchanting Marienna ruſhed to his arms, when he preſſed her ſo cloſe to his boſom, that his ſilver hairs almoſt covered her roſe-woven countenance.—Alas! poor William, we yet ſee thee only in the back-ground of this delicious picture—this cannot long be thy ſituation—is not thy divine miſtreſs telling her father, as faſt as ſhe can ſpeak, and faſter than ſhe ever ſpoke before, that it is to thee he is indebted for the life of his beloved daughter, and hardly leſs beloved ſervant—is not the grateful German himſelf loading thee with applauſes. Step forward then that we might place thee on our canvaſs in a light more to the advantage of thy heroiſm, and of thy virtues.

The moment Villeroy was informed that the deliverer of his daughter ſtood before him, he broke from her embraces—he dropped the hand of Germain, and catching William in his arms, who ſtood trembling, his eyes caſt upon the ground—

"Child of misfortune," cried he, "you have acquired rights to my heart, which none ſhall ever diſpute with thee—are you willing to adopt my retirement—to quit mankind, who are all wicked—all deceitful—to live with, to love, and never to leave me, except——"

Here William interrupted him; "Never, never, my father, except you command me to depart from you.—Ah! will you be my father? will you let me be the brother of your Marienna?"

"Father!" cried Villeroy, ſtarting, "ah! how that appellation from thy lips penetrates my very ſoul—but for me—let us ſay no more about it—come again to my arms—be to me as the ſon thoſe eyes have ſeen expire—and be the brother of Marienna: but remember the gate through which you are permitted to paſs is ſhut againſt all the world but yourſelf; therefore, if ſolitude does not pleaſe you, turn back before it be too late."

William reſpectfully imprinted his aſſent on the hand of Villeroy, and they all entered the houſe together.

Whilſt William is telling his pathetic tale to an audience of three, who are liſtening to him with much intereſt, let us take a peep round the ſtrange building to which the good or evil fortune of our young hero had conducted him.

We

We ſhall find it a ſmall houſe, fortified againſt all ſurpriſes by a high wall, flat at the top, which nearly concealed every part of it, till we have paſſed over the drawbridge; the edifice conſiſts of only one roomy ſtory, erected in four parts, each containing two apartments, where there is no diſplay either of architecture, or ornaments of any ſort; in lieu of which we ſee every thing that can be uſeful and commodious arranged in the neateſt manner—when we ſay there are no ornaments, we ſhould except a very fine harpſichord, ſtanding in a ſmall dreſſing room, which Marienna calls her own; how ſhe attained the uſe of it will be made known hereafter: it was extremely inſtrumental to the amuſement of her leiſure hours—it alſo ſoothed thoſe of gloomy regret, to which the days of her father were but too much dedicated. In the court of this odd dwelling is a ſtable for their horſe—a granary for their corn—a ſhed for tools of every kind—and ſtill within the walls ſprings of clear water, beſides a good kitchen garden, well repleniſhed with fruits and vegetables; nor is there wanting a yard for poultry—this little ſecluded family having every recourſe, every neceſſary, every comfort within themſelves.

It is time now that we return back into the houſe, becauſe William has juſt finiſh-

ed the ſad relation of his woes—we ſee him embraced by Villeroy, Marienna, and Germain—we ſee them contending which ſhall pour upon his wounded ſenſibility the ſweeteſt balm of conſolation—we hear him gratefully acknowledge that he ſhall owe all his yet untaſted happineſs to their friendſhip—alas! miſtaken youth! thou art not yet doomed to be happy—thy too ſuſceptible apprehenſions muſt follow thee everywhere—ſhake off the errors of prejudice—learn to know that happineſs will not mate with ſuſpicion—teach thyſelf to believe that though ſome men are falſe, cruel, and deceitful, there are a much larger proportion of the human race whoſe hearts are upright, feeling, and generous.

CHAP. XVI.

A LEAGUE OF FRIENDSHIP, AND A VIEW OF THE HOUSE.

WILLIAM recited his misfortunes with an air of dignity ſo happily ſoftened by the accents of ſimplicity, as left no doubt of their being ſtrictly true on the minds of his attentive auditors. Marienna never ceaſed to weep the whole time he was repeating them—Germain ſeemed to feel leſs pain from the wounds inflicted on his own body than for thoſe that rankled in the mind of his young preſerver. As to Villeroy, he was affected in a very ſingular manner—his eyes, which had in their expreſſion a mixture of many paſſions, ſettled themſelves on the countenance of William from the beginning to the end of his ſad memoir; ſometimes they ſpoke the noble emotions of ſympathy, but oftener expreſſed thoughtfulneſs; nor were they wanting to throw out momentary flaſhes of ſparkling fury, inſomuch that the timid narrator occaſionally felt himſelf incommoded by their glances.

Whilſt they were partaking of ſuch refreſhments as Nature demanded, Villeroy

placed William at his ſide, frequently exclaiming, as if ſpeaking to his own reflection, "Yes, it will do—it now can be done."—Then applying to our hero, he would add, "You are very young, my ſon, to have already acquired ſo much experience in the execrable villany of men.—Ah! how well do you know them! how well do you judge of them——What courage—what philoſophy—you intereſt me in a degree that I am not able to deſcribe. Dear youth, I build on your qualifications hopes, which are exceedingly dear to me—thou ſhalt one day know them, but muſt prove thy virtues before I give thee the employment I have ordained for them. Hear what I require of you—for the ſpace of one year, without aſking to know my ſecret, you ſhall live in this houſe—you ſhall be to me as a ſon, and I will be to you in the place of that father who has caſt you from him.—Further I expect, that you ſhall ſhew the ſame obedience, the ſame implicit reſpect to my commands, as if I were in reality the author of your exiſtence—are you ready to vow for me the prompt ſubmiſſion I require from you, in return for my paternal affection?"

"O yes, my father! and in the preſence of the Supreme Being I atteſt the vow with which I bind myſelf your's for ever."

He

He ſpoke to Villeroy, but he looked only on the beautiful Marienna.

"Come then," cried the old man, very well pleaſed, "come to my arms, let me embrace thee as my own, and never forget the ſacred engagement into which we have entered."

"Your goodneſs," replied William, "will make a conſtant diſplay of it before my eyes; it is impoſſible, I ſhould ever ceaſe to remembed it."

"Thank God," returned Villeroy, who has ſent thee to give me the only conſolation my ſoul can ever admit: "I have but one friend on earth—it is the good, the ſenſible Germain—love him as you do me—a faithful ſervant is a treaſure the moſt precious—you behold my only child—my only remaining bleſſing—my beloved—my amiable Marienna: be to her a brother—be to her a maſter—teach her thoſe ſciences, thoſe talents you poſſeſs: above all, inſtruct her in your happy principles of hatred to the world, and diſtruſt of mankind. I am old, my dear children; when I can no longer be with you, perhaps it may be your deſire to live in great towns to launch into all their extravagant turbulences.

"Never, never," cried William and Marienna, both in the ſame inſtant.

"I wiſh to believe you," ſaid Villeroy, "and I command you to love one another."

What a command for two fond hearts, which were already united by the ties of inclination.—William was overwhelmed with joy nearly amounting to agony; for it muſt have been obſerved, that his feelings were ſeldom regulated by moderation; as to Marienna, ſhe who never diſguiſed her ſentiments, now made no effort to diſguiſe her tranſports; ſhe held out her hand to William, and preſſed his, ſaying, "Yes, dear father, I promiſe you to love him very tenderly."

Soon after they all four quitted their frugal table, when Villeroy propoſed to ſhew his newly-adopted ſon the convenience of his little manſion; he walked on before, attended by Germain; Marienna followed, leaning on the arm of the graceful William, talking to him of the happy hours they ſhould paſs together, and perſuading him never to think on the ungrateful world, from whence he had been ſo cruelly driven.

Whilſt ſhe was thus prattling, and looking up in his face with the modeſty of an angel, and the fondneſs of love, Villeroy called upon William to admire the court to which he had conducted him; but William heard only the voice of Marienna, and

and ſaw nothing which was offered to his view but the charms of that lovely girl: her father, though far from feeling diſpleaſure at his general abſence to all other objects but herſelf, yet awakened his attention by another ſummons for him to obſerve the form of the court, in the middle of which ſtood the houſe.—William declared he had never beheld any thing half ſo charming—he was ſtill thinking of Marienna, yet his anſwer ſerved very well for both.

"The body of this houſe," ſaid Villeroy, "is thirty feet in length, and fifty in elevation."

"Ah! cried William, "I have heard of happineſs, but never taſted it until now."

They aſcended four ſteps, and entered into a kind of veſtibule, very ſmall.

"How do you like this?" ſaid Marienna.

"Oh! it is magnificent," exclaimed William.

She was not the only perſon who laughed at the error of his expreſſion.—They were juſt then at the foot of a little ſtaircaſe, which they turned from to paſs through a door on the right that led them to a room, whoſe only ornaments were a chimney, a table, ſome chairs, and a pretty conſiderable collection of books.

"I call this my library," ſaid the conductor of William: "it is twelve feet by fifteen—I hope you will find it both uſeful and convenient."

"I never deſire to go out of it as long as I live," replied William.

"Yes, you muſt go a little farther," returned Villeroy, and mounting ſome ſtone ſtairs, paved in Moſaic, brought him upon the firſt floor—"Here I ſleep," ſaid he, as they entered a chamber; "I would have you take notice of its furniture."

William looked round, yet ſtill ſaw nothing but Marienna, till her father made him look at the bed; ſome arms, two pictures, four firelocks, and half a dozen maps faſtened to the walls, all of which he praiſed with the ſame incoherence as before, very much to the amuſement of his three ſolitary companions.

The next apartment he entered belonged to the enchantreſs, who had locked up all his ſenſes; but in this room there ſeemed to be an active and counter-magic that was to reſtore them; it contained ſome fine drawings of her own performance; he admired them with enthuſiaſm, but he admired them with true judgement. The fine harpſichord which occupied the largeſt ſpace of the room caught a ſhare of his attention; he fancied how

often her lovely fingers muſt have touched the keys of this favoured inſtrument—he ſat down before it without being invited to do ſo, and produced the ſweeteſt ſounds of harmony—ſo ſoft, ſo plaintive, as diſſolved in tears thoſe, who a few minutes before had made themſelves merry at his expence.

Marienna was the only perſon preſent who could draw this ſecond Orpheus from charming them in his turn out of their ſenſes—ſhe was even forced to exert a gentle violence to make him forbear, when ſhe could ſtand no longer againſt the united powers of voice, words, and muſic, each in itſelf enough to have tamed the fury of a tiger.—Suppoſe we give to them and ourſelves a ſhort reſpite, and put an end to this chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

CONTINUATION.

HAVING ſeen whatever is curious within, let us return again, as they did, to the outſide of the little fortreſs; let us obſerve the windows of the granary, which are long, but extremely narrow; the platforms are hewn ſtone; on the cauſeway, at the foot of the ſteps, is a door painted black; at this door Villeroy made a ſtop—"This door," ſaid he to William, "leads to a place where none muſt enter but myſelf or Germain—but go now with my daughter, ſhe will ſhew you our garden, whilſt we two old men repoſe from our fatigue, and wait for your return."

Marienna preſently brought her new friend to a ſpot that perfectly charmed him; beſides being large, and producing almoſt every kind of fruit and vegetables, it had ſome fine plantations; but above them all towered one majeſtic poplar, at the bottom of which ran, over broken rock work, a limpid ſtream, that, eſcaping from the huge precipices in the torrent, had rolled along till it fell at the foot of the memorable poplar, from thence ſprang

ſprang off, in different directions, ſtriping the verdant graſs with liquid ſilver; a ruſtic bridge offered our lovers a paſſage to the favourite arbour of theſe ſolitaries, which the hands of Villeroy had formed—it ſeemed calculated to inſpire tranquillity, and encourage meditation.

"Look!" cried Marienna, as they paſſed a ſmall plantation of flowers, "theſe I cultivated alone, but now I ſhall have you to aſſiſt me, we ſhall make it much finer. Here," ſaid ſhe, arriving at the arbour, "when we have done our work, we will ſit down, and take our pleaſure; you ſhall fetch me water from that clear ſtream, and I will gather for you thoſe fruits of our garden which I know to be the moſt delicious—ah! William, William, do you think you can be as happy here as you was at college?"—William preſſed her hands, he would have ſpoke, but ſentiment had flown away with expreſſion; however, the mute tenderneſs with which he regarded her left nothing for language to explain. At this critical moment, when nothing was leſs expected than the preſence of intruders, Villeroy and Germain came to appriſe them that it was time they ſhould re-enter the houſe—Germain ſhook his head—Villeroy ſmiled—and the young people bluſhed.

Night

Night was beginning to cover nature with her ſleep-creating veil; the birds, perching on the trees, attended the ſun's retreat, more inclined to repoſe in the branches than to continue their day ſong; the nightingales alone thought it the beſt time to begin their concert; they raiſed their melodious notes, and, in ſweet reſponſives, anſwered to each other's ſummons, to aſſiſt in the nocturnal ſerenade; it was time, therefore, that our little company of recluſes ſhould retire, poſſeſſing none of thoſe artificial luminaries with which the children of luxury contrive to light them in their purſuits after pleaſure, their eyes ſhut with the diſappearance of day, and opened at its earlieſt dawning.

William was conducted to the outſide of his chamber by his three guardians, who, having embraced him one after another, left him to enter it alone; he felt no inclination to ſleep, he was too fondly taken up with the image of Marienna; ſometimes he would think of his marvellouſly fortunate ſituation, ſometimes on what he ſhould do to preſerve the friendſhip of ſo charming a family; but were not theſe thoughts all produced by Marienna herſelf?—certainly they were; his miſanthropic humour abated, his heart was cheered, and his ſuſpicions lulled to repoſe—he hears a noiſe—he ſtarts—it is ſome-

body turning a key on the outſide of his door—he calls out, "Who is there?"—he receives no anſwer; he runs to try if it will open, it is double locked; he hears a footſtep retreating—"Good heavens! what is the meaning of this precaution?—is my honour doubted?—am I ſuppoſed a robber, a traitor?" and he threw himſelf on a chair, more than half petrified with aſtoniſhment.—"Ah!—No;" cried he, "I am ever to be the victim of deception—I am fallen into the hands of plunderers, who will, no doubt, put me to death, if I refuſe to do as they do. Oh, how perfidious to cover themſelves with the maſk of virtue!—Marienna too, is it poſſible Marienna ſhould belong to villains of this deſcription?—is all her artleſs modeſty but affectation? O God! let her be innocent, and I will die to keep myſelf clear from the guilt of the others!"

Thus reſtored to his uſual habit of gloomy reflection, he recalled all the occurrences of the day; ſeveral expreſſions of Villeroy's formed all his doubts, if doubts he had, into abſolute certainties; he ſaw himſelf on the brink of a precipice—his head turned giddy—he was ſurrounded by a thouſand phantoms, all of his own creating, and every one of them more frightful than another; his hair ſtood erect—he trembled from head to foot

foot—he forms a violent reſolution of inſtantly leaving the fatal fortreſs, even at the riſk of breaking his neck; he goes to the window which fronts the garden; he intends to throw himſelf from it, but large large bars of iron impede his paſſage.—"It is then done," he cried; "I am impriſoned every way.—Ah! Marienna, Marienna, how I pity, yet how I deſpiſe you—ſo young, ſo beautiful—and the companion of murderers!—Alas! thou might be ignorant of their dreadful trade; perhaps they only ſhed human blood when thou, dear Maid, art innocently repoſing on thy pillow; perhaps, at this moment, thou art dreaming of that William, who is ſo ſoon to become their ſanguinary ſacrifice."

Thus ſpoke our hero, whilſt his face was ſtill preſſed againſt the iron grates, from whence, by the pale glimmering of the moon, he overlooked the court, the garden, and part of the foreſt beyond it; preſently he ſaw—O reader! now grant him your compaſſion; put yourſelf in his place, and feel, if you can, what he felt:—he ſaw the door under the cauſeway, that door of which Villeroy had made ſo great a myſtery, he ſaw it open, and Villeroy, aſſiſted by Germain, come out of it, carrying a coffin on their ſhoulders covered with black cloth, and each a lighted torch in his hand.

What

What a ſight for a being ſo timid, ſo ſuſpicious; and what courage, what confidence would not have been daunted at ſuch an exhibition? William did not die with terror; and who could have done more than to have ſurvived under it; he even preſerved his recollection enough to watch the motions of this alarming proceſſion; they traverſed the garden in profound ſilence; they bore their burden to the foot of the poplar, where they ſat it down, but the diſtance from which he obſerved them prevented him from hearing what they ſaid, and almoſt from ſeeing what they did; he could only diſtinguiſh Villeroy and Germain kneeling by the coffin, as if to diſcover whether the perſon incloſed in it was ſufficiently ſilenced, at leaſt ſuch was the conſtruction he put upon the ſcene which paſſed before him—and he exclaimed, "How few moments may yet remain between me and eternity! doubtleſs I ſhall be their very next victim! Oh, my father! Oh, Dumount! why have you forſaken me?"

Juſt as he uttered theſe words, a fire ſeemed to be kindled near the coffin, the flames of which burſt with ſo much brightneſs, that not only the leaves of the trees were illuminated, but the birds that perched upon the branches, awakened by the extraordinary refulgence, ſent forth the

moſt melancholy cries—preſently the lights were extinguiſhed, and the whole phenomenon diſappeared.—William now began to rub his eyes—the whole was unnatural—it was impoſſible to exiſt in reality—theſe terrifying viſions muſt be the effect of uneaſy ſlumbers; yes, he had been certainly dreaming; at laſt he is painfully convinced it is no dream—he throws himſelf on his bed, giving way to the moſt agonizing reflections, increaſed even to horror, by the noiſe he heard of bolts, bars, and keys.

William now, in his own gloomy imagination, was inſtantly to increaſe the number of thoſe unfortunate victims, whom, no doubt, had been firſt plundered, afterwards deſtroyed, and, to conclude the meaſure of their crimes, the unhappy traveller was conſumed by fire, that, if a diſcovery ſhould be made of their den, no traces of their bloody profeſſion ſhould appear againſt them: but why deprive of life one who had nothing to loſe? Villeroy muſt have been the dupe of mankind; he carried on this dreadful trade to ſatisfy his revenge; and the vengeance he owed them would be ſatisfied with no ſmaller ſacrifice than all that ſhould fall into the ſnares he ſpread for them. Alas! of what crime could William, ſo young, ſo inexperienced, have been guilty? what could he

he have done that merited this terrible puniſhment? it was not death he feared, for death to the wretched loſes all its terrors, when we have nothing for which we wiſh to live; no proſpect but of miſery, who would repine that the ſcene is about to be cloſed for ever? it was then only the cruelty, the deceit of theſe wretches, who now appeared, to his diſturbed imagination, as a diſgrace to humanity, which made him ſo ardently watch for the return of day, when he was determined to reſiſt, and, not without a ſtruggle, reſign his life to the knife of this butcher!—he trembled, his blood ran cold; but he was fixed to defend himſelf with vigour againſt Villeroy, Germain and Marienna. "Marienna! could ſhe then indeed be culpable?"

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE CONVERSATION.

AURORA had now chaſed the heavy gloom of night from the face of nature; the ſun, riſing in ſplendid brightneſs, already began to gild the dark foliage of the foreſt with its own pure bullion; the violet-coloured ſky, without clouds, announced a brilliant day; a delightful freſhneſs breathed on all; the dew-drops ſtood trembling on the flowers and trees, the zephyrs lightly ſhook them off; and, as they gently fell on the green turf, to give way to the ardent heat of mid-day, they reſembled a ſhower of diamonds.

All nature beautiful and tranquil, the heart of William was alone ſad—pale, languid, and filled with dreadful expectation, he waited the return of light; he no ſooner beheld its firſt rays, but, leaving that couch on which he had taſted no repoſe, he addreſſed himſelf to the Supreme Creator of all that breathes: prayer had a little re-eſtabliſhed the calm of his ſenſes; he was riſing from his knees, when he heard a voice, on the outſide of the door, in gentle accents inquiring if he were yet awake?

awake? "Yes," he cried, "yes; I am now ready for all that can happen to me."

"It is Villeroy," continued the ſpeaker, "who is come hither to embrace and conduct you to your other friends."

William ſtopped, petrified with aſtoniſhment; did he judge too haſtily when he concluded it a new ſnare?—he gave himſelf up to a thouſand reflections; during which time Villeroy, having unlocked the door, had entered the room, but remained motionleſs, on obſerving the alteration in his young *protége*; he took his paſſive hand, which was moiſtened by the dews of apprehenſion, whilſt he addreſſed theſe words to him, with an air of ſo much tenderneſs and truth, that the timid William could not reſiſt the conviction they carried to his heart, and his before faded cheek was ſuffuſed by the crimſon bluſh of remorſe for the errors he had indulged, ſo degrading to the character of the venerable man, in whoſe preſence he now found himſelf.

"Is it, my ſon, becauſe I laſt night held you in a kind of captivity, that I thus find you plunged in agitation and diſtreſs?—Ah! do not injure him who will be to you a father by harbouring thoſe injurious ſuſpicions."

"Oh! Sir, I do not; indeed they are all gone, and I am now covered with confuſion for ever having given way to them."

"Calm

"Calm yourſelf then, and attend to the counſels of him who wiſhes to eradicate this infantine timidity, which it affects him to diſcover in you. It is true that I laſt night locked you in your room, and ſhall continue the ſame precaution, which is to me more eſſential than you can conceive, but it need not fill you with alarm; every day that we paſs together I will beſtow on you a thouſand proofs of that friendſhip I entertain for you. It is neceſſary that you do not ſeek to penetrate this melancholy ſecret, it is now my only good; leave then to me its undivided poſſeſſion; merit by your ſubmiſſion, and reſpect, my dear child, the confidence I mean one day to beſtow on you; ſoon you ſhall be inſtructed of my name, my ſituation, and my misfortunes; I have no doubt but you will be worthy of this truſt, and therefore do not mean to hide from you, that I expect, at your hands, the moſt ſingular ſervice; but it is founded on juſtice, and your gratitude and affection for me will make it eaſy for you to accompliſh. I am old, my dear William; I have been moſt inhumanly betrayed, and deprived of all that was moſt dear to me in life; you ſhall be my avenger—you alone merit the prize which is deſtined for him who will become ſo; it is a charming recompenſe, and will be moſt valuable to your heart; but do not,

I conjure

I conjure you, preſs me to further explanation; leave me yet in quiet poſſeſſion of my deſign, it ſhall ſoon be repoſed in your boſom, then you ſhall be made acquainted with all; but in the mean time, I muſt place bounds to your curioſity; I do not blame it as a crime, at your age it is natural; I demand only of you, as the higheſt favour you can beſtow, that you will ſuffer yourſelf to be ſecured in your chamber every night; on this condition live with us; calm theſe cruel inquietudes, and be perfectly convinced that, in this retreat, your innocence runs no riſk, where we ſtudy only religion, virtue, and wiſdom."

This diſcourſe was perfectly ſatisfactory to William; the balm of conſolation deſcended to his heart, and ſerenity was eſtabliſhed in his countenance; his ſoul was frank and honeſt; he recounted to Villeroy his fooliſh terrors, who ſmiled, and embraced him.

The father of Marienna felt himſelf a little hurt when he firſt diſcovered William had witneſſed their nocturnal ceremony; but preſently recovering himſelf, he took his arm, and together they deſcended to the apartment of Marienna, who, juſt riſen, appeared even more lovely than on the preceding day in the eyes of the faſcinated William; the loſs of ſleep had added a penſive languor to her beautiful face,

face, on which, when her father rallied her, a roſy bluſh ſpread itſelf, with the moſt incomparable grace, over her fair cheek.

It was not the ſame gloomy objects, which preſented themſelves to the view of our hero, that had diſturbed the before tranquil repoſe of the innocent Marienna; it was the voice of love, which, for the firſt time, begun to ſpeak in an audible voice to her heart, but which was attributed by herſelf to the happineſs ſhe was going to enjoy in the ſociety of a companion who appeared ſo charming; all theſe lively images had ſo effectually baniſhed the drowſy god, that, at ſix o'clock, ſhe roſe without having once been viſited by him. When this child of ſimplicity was again beheld by our amiable William, how ſeverely did he blame himſelf for ever having thought of her with diſtruſt; they were preſently joined by Germain, and they united their entreaties that their new guest would allow them to judge of his muſical abilities; William granted their requeſt, he ſung his romance, and his auditors could not reſtrain the tribute of their tears; the delicate fingers of Marienna next touched the keys of the harpſichord, and though with far leſs execution than William, he was enchanted; but above all, with the verſes ſhe ſung; they had been the production of her waking hours the night before

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the muſic, which accompanied them, was ſo ſoft and melodious, that the good old Villeroy had ſome difficulty to believe it really the compoſition of his daughter.

SONG.

Ah! why ſay that love, in one's youth,
Forms a band that is fatal in age?
Can the morn of our unſully'd truth
Caſt a blot on affection's fair page?
Let philoſophers ſay what they will,
They never my love ſhall control;
Dear William my boſom ſhall fill,
And govern each thought of my ſoul.
I know that our hearts are agreed;
His heart ſpeaks a language as pure
As that heart which, to ſave him, would bleed,
Then weep that it could not do more!
How radiant the fire of love,
When ſimplicity kindles the flame?
Marienna ſhall be true as the dove,
And William ſhall ſhelter her fame.
Thy bitters, O Love! let me ſhun;
Fill my cup with ſweets to the edge.
Alas! I am loſt and undone,
Should my William refuſe the fond pledge.

The whole of that day was paſſed in varied and pleaſing amuſements—when night approached, William was again locked in his room, but it no longer filled him with inquietude; he enjoyed a ſound and refreſhing ſlumber, from which he did not awaken till day broke on his ſealed eyelids—it had been decided on the foregoing day, that on the morrow William ſhould

commence thoſe inſtructions which were to teach the artleſs Marienna ſome of the accompliſhments of her ſex and age: he went to her room—Villeroy and Germain to the different employments which were neceſſary in the houſe and garden, ſo that our young maſter remained alone with his beautiful ſcholar: my readers may judge, in ſome meaſure, by the ſample I am about to give of this leſſon, all the improvement, which in the end was likely to be received by the daughter of Villeroy, from William's inſtructions—enter then with me into the ſmall room, and let us behold, without interrupting them, Marienna ſeated at the inſtrument——one of thoſe hands which ſhould have made the keys vibrate to her touch, held captive by the moſt elegant youth in the world.

"Marienna, that ſong which yeſterday you ſung to us, I entreat you ſay, Was it on me you made it?"

"For whom but yourſelf ſhould it have been compoſed?—there are not, I am ſure, two Williams in the world—at leaſt not another I could love ſo well."

"That is exactly as I think. I have ſeen many women, but never a Marienna."

"Ah! ſurely, my dear friend, you laugh at me. I have not their charms—their accompliſhments—their finery."

"Finery is the fruit of art, but charms are the gifts of Nature; and thoſe you poſſeſs

poſſeſs in their higheſt degree, and joined to a heart——"

Marienna interrupting him, "Yes! now I know I have a heart—it is but two days only that I have been ſenſible of it—till I ſaw you it was a very ſimple one."

"What, did it never palpitate for your father?—for Germain?"

"Yes, without doubt, but it was a very different ſenſation—I will aſk of my father to explain to me thoſe new ſentiments, and then I ſhall be better able to deſcribe them to you."

"My God! aſk your father to explain them."

"To be ſure—why ſhould I hide from him that which he will ſo much approve? No, I will never have any other confidante than himſelf; and when you and I, William, have been walking together, or repoſing ourſelves in the little pleaſant arbour—when we ſhall have ſaid to each other a hundred times in the day how much we love, I ſhall every night repeat our converſation to him."

"Heaven preſerve me, what innocence!"

"Dear William, why this aſtoniſhment?—my father is very content when I am happy; and if I do take delight in you, why is it you fancy that he will be ſorry?"

"But has he never ſpoken to you of love?"

"O truly has he—very often—he has told a hundred times that it is a very dangerous and troubleſome paſſion—that it overpowers the ſenſes and the reaſon—that it makes one jealous, unjuſt, and full of ſuſpicion. Yes, indeed, he has bid me very, very often defend myſelf from giving way to theſe cruel ſentiments."

"Very well; then, my Marienna, do you ſuppoſe he will approve of thoſe we entertain for each other?"

"O dear, you are very much miſtaken; it is not that ſort of love I feel for you—I ſhould be very ſorry if I felt any of thoſe ſenſations which my father has deſcribed to me as ſo unpleaſant. So do not ſuppoſe in future that I am at all in love with you, for I do aſſure you I am not."

"Guard ever, my beloved Marienna, thoſe pure and ſimple ſentiments—may no others ever find entrance into your breaſt—nevertheleſs, believe what I ſay; take my advice ſo far as not to diſcover them to Villeroy."

"William, I ſhall love you no longer if you wiſh to hinder me from placing confidence in ſo reſpectable a father; neither muſt he be the only perſon who is made acquainted with the moſt ſecret thoughts of our hearts—we muſt alſo make

make them known to his old friend Germain."

"Oh, to the whole world without doubt—Marienna, you will prepare ſuch woes for us, if——"

"Dear me, how?—ſee how frightened you are at every thing; ſo let us quit this ſubject, and do you endeavour to teach me my leſſon."

"You do not underſtand me—if you knew mankind——"

"Mankind indeed!—why my father or Germain are not of mankind."

"Your father is ſo good, ſo kind, ſo generous, that what you ſay is almoſt true—tell me, do you know his misfortunes?"

"No! but Germain knows them all."

"And have you never known your mother?"

"O yes! how I loved her! and how ſhe uſed to kiſs her little Marienna."

"What now is become of her?"

"That I cannot tell you, becauſe I do not myſelf know—I was brought up in a convent until I was eight years old; and Mama often came to ſee me towards the end of the time I was there—I did not hear of or ſee her; and when my dear father brought me hither, he told me that his wife, that his ſon (my brother whom I never knew), was near to us; that they

ſaw us every day, and that in ſome years I ſhould have the good fortune to embrace them—they muſt, I fear, have been very unhappy, becauſe my father and Germain never ſpeak of them without being drowned in tears."

"But have you never aſked any queſtions of them?"

"It is the ſecret of my father, as ſuch I reſpect, without wiſhing to violate it. I know, for example, that each night he deſcends with his old ſervant into the cavern, which is beneath our houſe; they remain there about an hour, then each retire to their apartment—every year there is one day which they mark by going and doing I do not know what ceremony at the foot of the great poplar: I have never accompanied them, becauſe I am locked every night into my room."

"This ſame ceremony, then, it was which ſo dreadfully alarmed me the other night. Marienna, I cannot divine this part of his misfortunes, or what it is has cauſed them—his wife—his ſon—alas! they have, perhaps, been the victims of the blackeſt treaſon."

"You then believe them to be dead?"

"Doubt it not."

"But I hoped one day again to have beheld them—indeed I cannot comprehend it."

"If

"If Villeroy has need of an avenger of his wrongs, he ſhall find one in his William, who will eſpouſe his quarrel."

"How tenderly he will love you—this worthy father already has he ſpoken of you. 'My daughter,' ſaid he, 'when your heart is firſt ſenſible—when you begin to love—turn all your affections on William, whom I believe to be worthy of them; but he muſt firſt merit the prize I reſerve for the ſignal ſervices that I ſhall expect from him; if you ſhould not love him, you will overturn all my views."

"O Heavens! and did he indeed ſay this?"

"Theſe were his very words——would it not then be ſhocking in us to withdraw from him our confidence?"

"O Heavens! what a man is this Villeroy—or rather let me ſay, what a beneficent deity—let us then reſign ourſelves, my amiable girl, to the tranſports of loving, and being beloved—let us hold inviolable thoſe vows which your father has ſanctioned by his benediction."

The hours of leſſons generally paſſed in theſe kind of diſcourſes, which ſo fully explained the tender ſentiments they cheriſhed; nevertheleſs William, who wiſhed his miſtreſs to excel in all the ſciences, made her apply more ſeriouſly, and in the end Marienna became a capital muſician,

and an adept in drawing, mathematics, phyſic, and aſtronomy: but theſe ſtudies did not in the leaſt withdraw her from the pleaſing leſſon ſhe had been taught by him; neither could time nor circumſtances ever leſſen the impreſſion it had made in her heart.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

SOMETHING OMITTED, AND THE VOICE IN THE FOREST.

WILLIAM, happy and beloved in the habitation of his friend, had now nearly forgotten all his diſtreſſes; muſic, agriculture, and ſometimes the pleaſures of the foreſt chaſe, varied his amuſements; the multiplicity of occupations that employed his moments left him no room for laſſitude or diſcontent. How gentle and pure the pleaſures enjoyed by our four ſolitaries; they poſſeſſed in each other every thing they wiſhed—they deſired nothing more, except that a ſigh would ſometimes eſcape from the breaſt of William when he thought of his father and Dumount—Nature itſelf appeared to reſpect the aſylum they had choſen, adding to their comforts, by warding off from their little encloſures the thunderbolts which had often ſtruck the tall trees of the foreſt; the robbers, whom they daily heard making noiſes and depredations without their walls, had never formed the perhaps impracticable attempt of ſcaling them. Germain went out but once in a year, that was to go to St. Mar-

celin to buy ſeeds and other neceſſaries, yet had never been ſtopped but that once, when the valour of William had given him a timely reſcue; it was only the interpoſition of heaven which could have conducted him with ſafety; in one of theſe excurſions Marienna had gained permiſſion to go with him, when ſhe loſt her liberty in the valley of Romains.

Villeroy, from day to day, ſtudied the character of his young friend; he found it, on all occaſions, firm and courageous, and he returned thanks to heaven for having ſent to him, in his retreat, the only being who perhaps in the whole world could be capable of ſerving him in the vengeance he meditated to take of his enemies, before he deſcended to the grave; he beheld, with ſatisfaction, the love which had taken poſſeſſion of his young people; his daughter concealed nothing from him, and he protected the progreſs of their paſſion, which, when it ſhould have arrived at its height, he calculated as the moſt proper time for the diſcloſure of his myſterious ſecret.

He particularly ordered Marienna never to ſuffer the moſt trifling liberty from her lover; indeed he almoſt precluded the poſſibility; he followed them himſelf every where, obſerved them with particular attention, and alſo put Germain to watch over

over them; but this caution was all uſeleſs, William was too delicate, too honourable, to violate, even in thought, the rights of hoſpitality; and Marienna, by far too pure, too virtuous to commit any action that ſhe would have bluſhed at acknowledging to her father, whoſe goodneſs approved their mutual paſſion, and had promiſed one day to unite them for ever!—they could therefore, at all times, expreſs the ſentiments they entertained for each other before him; this liberty repreſſed every improper idea, ſo that if love, by chance, ſometimes placed a bandage on their eyes, reaſon inſtantly lighted her flambeaux to diſcover to them the precipice on which they were ſtanding; ſhewing them the remorſe and diſhonour they would feel if they ſhould quit the bower leſs innocent then they had entered it.

Theſe two young people paſſionately loved each other, but it was with an honeſt and pure affection, founded on the ſtrong baſis of virtue, eſteem, and the conſent of a father. The gentle affections of the ſoul which are not proſtituted to any unworthy impulſe of the ſenſes, which are content with the calm of ſentiment and meditation, which knows neither ſharp and biting remorſe, perfidious myſtery, nor culpable ſuſpicions, but are crowned by the authority of a parent; ah! how very

very few the number of thoſe hearts which are calculated to feel all the delights of ſuch felicity.

William could not but perceive that all their ſteps were watched by Villeroy, and his honour felt wounded at the idea that he ſhould be thought capable of ſuch baſeneſs, a ſort of humiliation that poiſoned all the happineſs he had before enjoyed; often after their return from a walk, when Villeroy has broke in upon a delightful tête à tête, often has the feeling youth retired to his chamber; and, unmindful of the regards and careſſes he has been receiving from the venerable old man, exclaimed, "Is it poſſible, can it really be, that he ſhould believe me capable of ſuch infamy? can he imagine that I am betraying the confidence his kindneſs has repoſed in me? does he ſuppoſe that I ſhall ſeduce the innocence of his daughter? O Heaven! of what have I then been guilty to merit ſo unparalleled an affront? ah! will he never underſtand that, oppoſed to a heart made up of gratitude and affection, ſuſpicions, injurious as theſe, will tear it in pieces? alas! mankind, will they never ceaſe to pierce it? O Villeroy! Villeroy! what torment do you not inflict upon me?"

The venerable old man ſometimes found him plunged in ſuch ſort of melancholy reflections, he demanded the cauſe of his ſorrow,

ſorrow, but William would not inſtruct him in it; the remembrance of his former diſtreſſes always ſerved him for a ready excuſe; and Villeroy, knowing him to be frank and ſincere, gave credit to his aſſertion; he would leave no method untried to conſole him; he would take his arm, lead him to the garden, and, by his careſſes and converſation, endeavour to diſſipate the melancholy which hung on the ſpirits of his young protégé.

There is, in the original manuſcript at this place, a deficiency of above twenty pages, ſome of which are quite deſtroyed, and others partly torn; it however appears, that this vacancy is not very intereſting; it chiefly contains an account only of the occupations and the pleaſures purſued by our four recluſes, and of the progreſs made by love in the hearts of our William and Marienna; I think it uſeleſs to ſupply this ſpace, which is unneceſſary to the hiſtory, ſo I ſhall only continue the narrative at the place where, in the original, it is again legible.

Thus paſſed the tranquil days of Villeroy; Marienna, William and Germain, every evening, when the weather was favourable, the toils of the day were terminated by a delightful walk; at the end of which all four ſeated themſelves in the beautiful little arbour, by the ſide of the limpid

limpid river, where they would ſolace in the enchanting comforts of friendly and unreſerved converſation, till the ſoft dews of evening, falling on their turf ſeats, made them take refuge in their comfortable home, when a frugal repaſt was ſucceeded by the moſt refreſhing and tranquil ſlumbers, undiſturbed, except when the riſing ſun, and twittering of the birds, announced a new day.

One year had thus paſſed away: the affections of our young friends had increaſed ſo rapidly, that they thought only of an approaching union, and determined, on their knees, to entreat of Villeroy to grant them the paternal benediction, and to think on ſome expedient to haſten the auguſt ſacrament of marriage, which it was not otherwiſe in their power to receive; but the old man, as poſitive as vindictive, had waited for this moment to diſcloſe to his gueſt the project he had formed: himſelf had blown the flame of paſſion to its higheſt pitch, in order to be aſſured of the fidelity with which he may expect to be ſerved; he was not yet ſufficiently convinced of the firmneſs and the courage of our amiable William; he wiſhed to prove if he was inviolably attached to him; he propoſed for ſome time longer to defer that communication, which would conſtitute his happineſs or his misfortune.

William,

William, ever ſuſpicious, ever ſuſceptible, alarmed by the delays of the father of Marienna, renewed his entreaties, that he would give him the object of all his tenderneſs; but the reply of Villeroy was invariably the ſame.

"It is not," would he ſay, "enough for me, my ſon, to know that you adore my daughter—that you deſire to conſtitute her felicity—I muſt alſo be aſſured that your friendſhip for her father equals your love for her—you muſt not expect the hand of Marienna, until I have received the moſt unequivocal proofs of your attachment."

William demanded of what nature were thoſe proofs propoſed, that he might immediately be brought to trial.

Villeroy did not anſwer; he preſſed his hand, ſighed, and withdrew, caſting on him a moſt mournful look.

What an embarraſſing ſituation for our young hero—it was now that his thoughts reverted to his early ſorrows, and deep groans iſſued from the bottom of his ſoul.

One day that he went to cut wood in the foreſt, he ſtopped with aſtoniſhment on perceiving his own name carved on the bark of a tree; he approached nearer, and diſtinguiſhing other characters, at laſt he read with horror the following words:

"William,

"William, fly from Villeroy—from the ſmall houſe—if you ſtay longer there is intended for you the blackeſt of crimes."

"Barbarians!" cried he, ſeized with indignation, "what villany lurks beneath this treaſon.—Villeroy is the moſt reſpectable of men—behold then the confidence I place in your infamous accuſation; he raiſed his arm, and with a hatchet effaced by one redoubtable blow the odious inſcription; though far from placing any confidence in the warning it gave him, yet he could not diſpel a ſentiment of melancholy which he vainly attempted to diſſipate."

"What hand," ſaid he, on recovering from his ſurpriſe, "what perfidious hand could have imparted to me this invidious counſel? I know no one in the univerſe—I am unknown to all—who is it then, informed that I inhabit this foreſt, can make this daring attempt to poiſon my felicity? Avaunt from my heart unjuſt ſuſpicions—in my breaſt ye ſhall gain no admittance—far, far from me be every thought which can make you culpable—oh! my more than father—thou deſign me for the blackeſt of crimes—thou the moſt virtuous, the moſt generous of mortals!—ah! that I could with my arm extirpate this horrid calumniator, who has committed ſuch an outrage on virtue, perſonified in

your

your ſhape—but whom can it be?—what intereſt can excite them to give me this dangerous advice?—is there then any one concerned in my exiſtence?—ah! may it not be my father!—He ſtarted—Can it be Dumount? My God! I did not ſufficiently examine the writing—by that I might perhaps have diſcovered them. Ah! if it be indeed thou, moſt beloved father, moſt dear friend, come to your unfortunate William! come and let me find ſafety in your arms. Yes! I now perfectly recollect the hand which traced thoſe characters; inſenſible as I was, to efface them ſo haſtily.—Ah! whither has my diſtraction led me—it ſeems I argue as if the whole world knew of my retreat—No, no! it cannot be! I will reject this too flattering idea—it cannot be that my parent, that the man who called himſelf my friend, but who alſo deſerted me in the moſt cruel manner—it cannot be either of them—it is ſome deſpicable raſcal that would catch me in his ſnare—I fly from the enemy of my repoſe—never more will I go from my darling fortreſs; there my foes will not invade me.

At his return home Villeroy perceived ſomething had diſturbed him; he made war againſt his melancholy—William excuſed himſelf as well as he could; but finding converſation irkſome, and that his

ſoul

ſoul had need of ſolitude, he haſtily ran into the garden; having gained the wall which divided it from the foreſt, his contemplations were broken by a voice gently calling him by his name.—He looked—he liſtened—and preſently very diſtinctly heard theſe words, which ſeemed to proceed from the wood——" William, your woes are over—throw your eyes on the rivulet which runs at your feet, and read."

William, awe-ſtricken, looked upon the water, and ſaw a piece of paper floating on its boſom, which ſeemed to have been conveyed from the foreſt through an aperture in the wall; it was tied to the branch of a tree, which he eagerly ſtopped, and looſing the billet, his aſtoniſhment redoubled on reading theſe words:

THE BILLET.

"Heaven is at length appeaſed—William, your affectionate father recognizes in you his beloved ſon—quit the fortreſs, and the foreſt of Chamboran—come and join him at St. Etienne, where he waits for you with your and his good friend Dumount——to-morrow at ſun-ſet come alone to that part of that foreſt where a ſtar is formed by the planting of five yew trees—there you will find a ſure guide, who will conduct you to the arms of the moſt

moſt unfortunate, but the moſt tender of fathers."

What a command!—William called upon the perſon concealed to ſhew himſelf, but received no anſwer. His father waited for him—he is acknowledged the ſon of that father—God! in what a moment this intelligence reaches him—how welcome, yet how unwelcome to his ſtruggling heart—what could he do—how determine—*nature* or *love* muſt be conquered—if love, would filial tranſports repay the injuries done to love—what an embarraſſment—what a cruel embarraſſment!

Several moments he remained almoſt without motion—the whole adventure appeared like a viſion of the night—his father recalled him—but how had he diſcovered his remote reſidence—who could have informed him of his concealment in the tremendous foreſt—did he alſo know who had been his protector—doubtleſs not, or he would have come in perſon to thank the generous man who ſaved his ſon from periſhing with hunger—yet it was poſſible he might have heard that Villeroy had a daughter—ah! that daughter to whom his ſoul was ſo tenderly attached—he might even have heard of this attachment—it might have offended him—perhaps it might have been the reaſon why he did not approach the fortreſs.

Again

Again he reaſſumes his mental argument—the letter was not written by his father, or Dumount; it was the hand of neither—what a myſtery!—a guide ſent to conduct him—what could be more myſterious!——O yes! a pit is certainly dug for him by the calumniator of the reſpectable Villeroy—there were ſome ſecret enemies who ſought their ſeparation with a view perhaps to the deſtruction of both.

All theſe ideas were the birth of a moment; the next furniſhed him with quite a new fet—the poſſibility that his father and Dumount might really be waiting for him in the village of St. Etienne, ſtaggered him in the firmneſs of his firſt opinions, and ſhook him with almoſt convulſive emotions. Nature cried, "Go to thy father." Love and gratitude united to detain him—where ought he to reſign himſelf—which was the voice that ſpoke the moſt imperiouſly to his agitated ſoul—it does not ſignify—unfortunate William! what will become of thee?

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

THE DETERMINATION.

DAY again iſſued forth from the father of light; the birds ſaluted her with their livelieſt concerts; nature put on the moſt brilliant garb to do her honour; every thing animate and inanimate welcomed the beneficent rays of morning.

William accuſtomed to contemplate and adore this majeſtic ſpectacle, now forgot to pay it the ſmalleſt homage, though he leaned from his chamber window, as if in the act of attention to its ſurrounding glories—alas! he ſaw nothing—he admired nothing—ſelf alone abſorbed his reflections; he threw his woe-wrought glances over the vaſt extent of foreſt—his heavy heart beat with impatience, whilſt his eyes were trying to trace out the ſpot where he had, during the courſe of a long ſleepleſs night, fully perſuaded himſelf, in ſpite of all obſtacles, that his father waited to receive him—he could not ſee the village of St. Etienne, but he fancied he had found out its ſituation.—"Romains," ſaid he, ſpeaking to his own thoughts, "Romains is in the middle, St. Mercellin on one ſide, there-

therefore St. Etienne muſt be behind that mountain covered with wood—yes, there is St. Etienne—there too is my father—my Dumount—ever, ever dear to me—Oh! that my eyes could penetrate thoſe obſtacles which impede my view—my ſoul is a better director—at this moment it ſhews them to me—they are in an hotel, comfortably ſitting ſide by ſide—ah! certainly they are ſaying to each other, ſoon, very ſoon, ſhall we ſee our William—he will preſerve the reverence he owes his father—he will prefer his father to his miſtreſs—nature has in his ſoul an empire ſtronger than love.—Yes, I go, my father—I wiſh to embrace your knees—to mingle my heart with yours;" then, pauſing, he exclaimed—" ungrateful ſon! doſt thou ſtill balance, ſtill heſitate—ah! love, love—is it poſſible that thy ſweets can repay me for the loſs of a father?—Oh! ſacred names of *father*, of *ſon*—ſhall thoſe of *lover*, of *friend*, maſter thy influence—No, it is done; Nature thou haſt conquered—when the ſun no longer diſpenſes his light on the ſummit of that mountain, I leave—his breath grew ſhort—I leave thee, Marienna—Villeroy, I leave you for ever." He uttered a deep groan, then added, " O God! let it not be for ever!—But can it really be my father by whom I am commanded to relinquiſh all I hold moſt dear

to

to me in the world?—Yes, it is himſelf whom I am to meet, this night, at the ſtar of yew trees in the foreſt—my heart tells me this truth—my heart cannot deceive me.—Haſten then, O glorious ſun! to thy ſetting, that I may be preſſed in the arms of my father."

Influenced by the idea that he ſhould meet his friends in the foreſt, William went, with a compoſed air, to the apartment of Marienna, gave her a leſſon in muſic, rather more accordant to the laws of harmony than the thoughts of the maſter; and, after it was over, to avoid her inquiries on the change of his humour, he went to ſeek Villeroy, and entreat his permiſſion to hunt in the foreſt when the heat of the day ſhould be over—alas! his beſt reſolutions were diſconcerted by the old man's embracing him, calling him his dear ſon, and loading him with a thouſand careſſes—to complete the victory of love and gratitude over the ſtruggles of filial duty and parental commands, Marienna, at the ſame inſtant that her father retired, came running towards him, and laying one of her pretty hands on his, "I have overtaken you," ſhe cried, "becauſe I forgot to tell you, dear William, what will give you a great deal of joy—this very night my father will confide to us the woes which have ſo long made him unhappy

happy—Oh! how often have you and I wiſhed to be entruſted with this dear confidence—Ah! why do you look upon me ſo ſadly? if you love me no longer, you are an ingrate; and, if I can, I will ceaſe to eſteem you. O dear! why do you cry? —is it I that make you weep?—nay, Monſieur, you muſt not be angry, I have ſaid nothing to make you very melancholy; I may, if you do not love me—I may try to love you leſs; but remember, I do not tell you that the trial would be worth making; No—no, I aſſure you, it would not be worth a farthing; I only deſire to live as long as I can ſee you, and no longer."

William heard this artleſs effuſion of tenderneſs with his eyes fixed upon the earth, afraid to look, and unable to ſpeak —he knelt at her feet to take the fair hand held out to him in token of peace; he preſſed it to his boſom, to his lips; and, riſing haſtily, fled from a temptation he was not able to reſiſt—more than a father muſt have been the ſacrifice of that moment!

Marienna, who had never before ſeen him ſo unaccountable or ſo deeply afflicted, with her beautiful eyes, moiſtened by tears, followed his footſteps, unobſerved by him, and ſtopped, when he ſtopped on the borders of the ſtream, near the little bridge which led to the arbour; at a ſmall diſtance

diſtance ſhe obſerved all his motions, and ſaw, with ſurpriſe, that he employed himſelf in tracing characters on the bark of the great poplar. "Ah!" ſaid ſhe, ſoftly, "when he is gone out of ſight, I will examine what he has written."

He ſtaid a conſiderable time at his work, which was very often interrupted, to lift his hands to heaven, and to ſigh as if his heart were breaking; at laſt, having kiſſed the letters he had been tracing, he retired, with ſlow and ſolemn ſteps, by another part of the garden.

Marienna now left the ſpot where ſhe had been obſcured, and advanced, trembling with impatience, towards the great poplar; where, caſting her fearful eyes on the fruit of his labour, ſhe had the affliction to find his griefs engraven, though not ſo deep as her own gentle heart took them from the firſt impreſſion. William had thus carved with his knife, "O Love! convert not thyſelf to hate, becauſe I tear my body from thee; thou art ever in my ſoul; thy image, Marienna, ſhall go every where with me—Oh! my Villeroy—Oh! Germain, fate compels me to leave ye—accuſe me not of ingratitude for a forced flight—you ſhall ſee me again—yes, I will one day reviſit you."

Marienna tried to read the whole of theſe diſtreſſing lines, but exquiſite ſenſi-

bility threw a veil over her eyes, a frightful miſt covered them—her blood froze—her knees ſmote each other—and ſhe fell down, at the foot of the tree, without ſenſe or motion.—A long, long time ſhe remained in this ſituation; and when, by little and little, ſhe recovered her ſtrength, ſtill, for many minutes, her unfaithful memory refuſed to relate the cauſe of a ſhock that had been attended with ſuch ſevere conſequences; ſhe felt that ſhe was unhappy—ſhe knew ſhe had been inſenſible—but the reaſon, at firſt, ſhe could not remember—ſhe roſe from the earth—ſhe looked round her, ſhe ſaw the fatal poplar; recollection ruſhed upon her ſenſes—ſhe hid her face with her hands, and ran ſcreaming towards the houſe, calling upon the name of William in heart-piercing agony—Alas! William heard not her cries; he had taken his road to the foreſt.

Arrived at the draw-bridge, there, once more, his indeciſion detained him—ſhould he break through all ties, and proceed—or ſhould he return to ſatisfy the demands of love and friendſhip?—"Beloved Marienna," he exclaimed—"reſpected Villeroy—dear Germain—Yes, I will go back once more to behold you!—my father—to-morrow will be time enough—I know where to find my father!—Ah! No—Ah! No;

No; I dare not diſobey"—and, entering the foreſt, he proceeded to the ſtar of five yew trees—he had gone about half a mile, and was not far diſtant from the place of appointment, when ſuddenly the ſky became obſcured, ſoon it emitted ſtreams of liquid lightning, thunder rolled over his devoted head, torrents of rain burſt from the cataracts of heaven, and darkneſs, the moſt tremendous, enveloped all nature as with a robe.

William ſhuddered at a ſcene ſo terrific; he was perſuaded that heaven, irritated by his ingratitude, had raiſed this ſtorm for his deſtruction—he fell on his knees—he would have fallen dead with terror, if the mouth of a large cavern had not been preſented to his ſight, by a burning flaſh, that rather ſeemed to threaten his diſſolution than to ſhew him a place of ſafety—he entered the friendly receſs to evade celeſtial vengeance; involuntary diſmay ſhook his limbs—his hair ſtood erect—he fancied a thouſand ſpectres were meeting and purſuing him—he ſtopped—he thought he heard a voice—he liſtened—he heard it again, it was accompanied by another—they were the voices of Marienna and Villeroy—they charge him with maledictions—they overwhelm him with bitter reproaches!—Juſt and great God! whither

ſhall he fly from the torments of his conſcience?—every where theſe phantoms follow him—every moment he hears their plaintive cries, accompanied by groans!

Let us leave William in his ſolitary ſituation, and inquire what is paſſing at the fortreſs.

CHAP. XXI.

AT THE BRINK OF AN INTERVIEW.

MARIENNA, after having read the lines on the poplar tree, haſtened home in hopes to have found William arrived there before her: what then muſt have been her grief—her diſappointment at finding he had not been heard of ſince her father had given him leave to hunt in the foreſt?

"To hunt!" cried Marienna, in a phrenſy of deſpair; "O no, my father! William has fled from us—he has quitted us for ever."

"How do you know this to be the caſe?"

"Liſten! O liſten! and I will tell you all his perfidy." She then recounted to Villeroy and Germain all that ſhe had witneſſed in the garden, beſeeching them to go in purſuit of the deſerter, not, ſhe ſaid, to bring him back—no—that ſhe did not deſire, but only to upbraid him with his ingratitude."

Villeroy tranquilly liſtened to his untranquil daughter; he told her what ſhe had propoſed was impracticable to perform—on what ſide of the foreſt ſhould they

purſue him—what road had he taken—he had been gone an hour—he was young—they old: if they knew his track, it was impoſſible for them to overtake him; beſides, the tempeſt of the night, which raged with ſuch unprecedented violence—could ſhe expect them to brave the vivid lightning to run after an ingrate—"No, my daughter," he continued, "this cannot be done—but be compoſed—tune your heart to peace—I promiſe to bring you back your beloved William—truſt me he ſhall return to you—I promiſe you alſo he ſhall pay dear enough for the tears he has coſt you—retire then for a moment into your apartment. Germain and I will conſer on the ſpeedieſt method by which to reſtore your truant and your happineſs."

Marienna, who knew the truth of her father, was tranſported by the aſſurance he had given her, and having thrown herſelf into his arms, and preſſed her lips on his cheeks, ſhe permitted Germain to lead her to her chamber, and to lock the door of it on the outſide—ſhe ſaw no more of them that night—it was to her a night of watchfulneſs—a night of torturing ſuſpenſe—a night of gayhopes, and gloomy deſpair.

Early in the morning her priſon is opened by Germain—he ſays to her, "Marienna, follow me! you are going to behold your

your lover." She has not taken off her clothes—ſhe is ready to depart with him that moment—with a cry of joy ſhe ſeizes his hand, and he helps her to deſcend into a place ſhe had never ſeen before: all the way ſhe is preſſing him to walk faſter that ſhe might load the perfidious youth with her anger. We are not going to anticipate our deſcription; rather let us ſee what is become of William in the cave.

A convict under the hands of his executioner might not have been very ready to change ſituations with our entombed hero, when after wandering an hour, groping his way in the dark, without any illuſion of fancy, he heard himſelf called, and ſaw a faint feeble light at a great diſtance down the cave—"Ah!" cried he, "this is another ſnare, from which it is impoſſible I ſhould eſcape—that voice—that light are inviting me to my deſtruction."—He pauſed—he ſuppoſed his fate inevitable—life to him who muſt not hope to live for Marienna, was but of little value—this thought inſpired him with courage almoſt ſupernatural; and he called out in a firm tone to the man who carried the light, but whom he could not diſtinguiſh, "What is your buſineſs with me?—if to rid me of life, diſpatch it quickly—but take care that you guard your own, for I will not ſell it too cheaply." Inſtead of anſwering, the man

carried the light farther into the cave; the now intrepid William followed him, reſolved to ſearch to the bottom of this extraordinary adventure.

His ſilent guide had been conducting him nearly an hour; and William, if he had not been fully employed in watching his motions, might have found much entertainment in viewing the beauties of his ſubterraneous priſon, diverſified with ſo much taſte, that it would rather have appeared the work of art than of nature: here a ſuperb petrefaction—there walls ſhining like diamonds—now a ſmall rivulet guſhing over burniſhed pebbles, and then playfully making its way through craggy rock-work.

At the farther end of this grotto the guide opened a door, and immediately diſappeared; a lamp ſuſpended from the ceiling ſhewed to William, as ſoon as he was enough collected to look about him, a ſuperb temple, the pavement and columns of which were black marble; melancholy, and even dreadfully magnificent was the whole of its appearance. William tried, but the door was faſt, his conductor had locked it after him—he could now only have recourſe to obſervation to evade the horrors that were again preſſing upon him—the firſt thing that attracted his notice were ſome ſteps, which having aſcended, he

he looked over a ſort of marble fence, from whence he beheld a tomb, and deſcending by another flight he ſaw a tablet, on which was repreſented two figures of a woman with a young child.

Such objects as theſe were not calculated to vanquiſh the gloom of his mind; he wondered what was intended by betraying him thither; he could no more account for the abſence of his guide, and was beginning to repent of his too great confidence, when behold once more the door is opened—Heavens! could he believe his ſenſes! It was Villeroy who entered—O earth, wilt thou not open to hide the ſhame, the remorſe, the confuſion of poor William!

CHAP. XXII.

THE INTERVIEW.

"INGRATE! ingrate!" ſaid the old man, in a tone of reproach, "where are your promiſes? where the vow you ſo ſolemnly made to me on the day when I firſt received you under my roof—you have renounced the one; you have broken the other—I expected juſt the ſort of conduct you have evinced—I wiſhed to prove you to the very bottom, becauſe I ſuſpected you of weakneſs."

William half raiſed his eyes towards his venerable friend; they were filled with the tears of contrition—they alſo teſtified ſome ſurpriſe.

"I ſee," continued the old man, "that you are ſorry for your fault, and that you do not know how to account for my diſcourſe; I ſhall therefore take the trouble to explain it—underſtand then, that I inſcribed on the tree thoſe lines which abuſed myſelf, and filled you with reſentment for the ſuppoſed injury done to me—ſo far it

it was well—the contempt with which you cut them from the bark pleaſed me, but your trials were not yet finiſhed—to aſſure myſelf of your friendſhip, and what degree of confidence I might ſafely repoſe in you, I invented that letter from your father. Ah! Ingrate, it was there you failed in your allegiance, and would have flown from me on the firſt temptation that offered itſelf."

William would have fallen at the feet of Villeroy—by what is he prevented from doing ſo? The door opens a ſecond time—he ſees Germain—but it is not the appearance of Germain by which he is petrified—he ſees alſo the beautiful Marienna—beautiful even in anger, and by the moſt natural miſtake in the world, inſtead of dropping at the knees of the father, he falls at thoſe of the daughter, who, forgetting to chide the penitent, pleaded his cauſe with ſo much eloquence, that whilſt he was allowed to give his reaſons for the crime he had committed, pity ſtole upon their hearts, and forgiveneſs followed; they even acknowledged Marienna was in the right when ſhe declared, that as his intentional fault had its ſource in filial affection, they ought to conſider it rather as an exceſs of virtue than a ſin of ingratitude.

William

William was now permitted to embrace them one after another, and the lovely Marienna, covered with bluſhes, did not haſtily retire from the arms of her truant.

Peace being reſtored, joy more animated than ever took poſſeſſion of the young lovers; yet they did not forget to remind Villeroy of the promiſe he had made, that he would recount to them his hiſtory. "I ſhall do ſo," ſaid the old man, and began after this manner:

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

FIRST PART OF A TALE.

MY real name is Dorance; my father had the honour to be preſident of the parliament of Grenoble, a reſpectable body, who, at all times, have ſet an example of equity and firmneſs. I was educated at Paris, under the tuition of a governor, wiſe and enlightened; whilſt I ſtudied in the college of *De Beauvais*, I had the misfortune to commence a friendſhip with the Chevalier Longuville; we were both young, lively, ardent; our diſpoſitions, in all reſpects, ſeemed to aſſimulate ſo well, that, in a ſhort time, we became almoſt inſeparable.

Longuville had no parent—the ſame tutor, who ſuperintended his education, had alſo the care of his fortune: on leaving college, I engaged him to go with me to ſpend ſome time at Grenoble; during our courſe of ſtudies he had been there, with me, to viſit my father, who was nearly as partial to him as to myſelf—Longuville conſented to our joint invitation with a great deal of tranſport, and

I have

I have reaſon to ſuppoſe he, at that time, loved me very ſincerely.

By the advice of my father, who divided his affection between us as if we had both been his ſons, we fixed on the bar for our profeſſion, though Longuville ſeemed to have a ſtronger liking for the law than I had: from the time this plan was ſettled, I could not but obſerve, that every day he became more and more ſerious; I thought too that his profeſſions of friendſhip to myſelf had very much abated; in a word, I found him diſtinctly civil, and coldly reſerved. I ſpoke of this change in my friend to my father, who could ſee no fault in his favourite; on the contrary, he aſſured me, that what I complained of was a virtue, that it ſhewed ſolidity of mind, and a wiſdom of character which deſerved admiration; he would bid me conſider him well, and follow the example he ſet me; but, above all things, never, by my ill-founded ſuſpicions, to run the hazard of loſing his friendſhip.

My father was the beſt, the moſt beneficent, the moſt ſenſible of men, I therefore ſuppoſed him to be in the right, and myſelf in the wrong; under this conviction, my eſteem for Longuville, inſtead of abating, very much increaſed, and I did all I could to regain his confidence, being perſuaded I muſt have done ſomething

thing or other which had made him withdraw it from me.

My father was intimate with the Baroneſs *De Myrſange*, the widow of an officer; ſhe had fixed her reſidence at Grenoble, and was the mother of one child, a beautiful, amiable, and adorable daughter, one whom I could never behold without emotion; every night my father, my friend, and I made up little parties at the houſe of Madame *Myrſange*, and my paſſion for Adele grew ſo ſtrong, that I could not help revealing it to Longuville; but what was my ſurpriſe, my aſtoniſhment, to find him receive my intelligence with indignation, inſtead of indulgence.—— "What," cried he, "doſt thou dare venture to love Mademoiſelle Myrſange!—piſh! do not ſtuff my ears with ſuch nonſenſe—thou, thou indeed love that girl—What, place your wiſhes on a little adventureſs?—pray who is there that knows any thing of their family, or their fortune? She and her mother, it is true, make a reſpectable figure enough, but they have lived here only three years; is that a time ſufficiently long to find out people's real characters?—from whence came they?—perhaps—Oh, for God's ſake! Dorance, open your eyes—I cannot help ſhewing you your folly—your father never can conſent—he never will conſent to a match

ſo monſtrous, ſo prepoſterous; I ſwear, if he ſhould aſk my advice upon the matter, I ſhall never give it in favour of this marriage; I love you too well to puſh you off a precipice."

I was ſo unprepared for this ſort of reſiſtance, that I hardly knew how to take it, ſtill I believed he meant well; therefore I did not reſent his freedom, but let him rant on, without interruption, reſolving to ſpeak, once for all, when he had done with the ſubject, which he ſeemed in no haſte to lay down.

"Mark what I tell you, Dorance," continued he; "if you ſhould, after all, marry this girl, you will ſorely repent it—ſhe is a vixen, a coquette; proud, imperious, deceitful in the extreme."—I could have held out no longer, but my father juſt then coming into the room, I did not deſire to carry on the converſation; for though it made no unfavourable impreſſion on me in reſpect to Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange*, on him, I was afraid, it would have had a very contrary effect.

He aſked us to attend him; he was going to the bar in order to plead on a very intereſting cauſe. "A young couple," ſaid he, "who married from inclination, without conſent of friends, are, in the ſpace of three months, become ſo perfectly

fectly odious to each other, as to ſue themſelves for a ſeparation, now mutually complaining of injuries, as they have before boaſted of their affections."

Longuville ſaw me change colour at this accidental circumſtance; and, the more to force me to bring the application home, made a long ſolemn diſſertation on the dangers of unequal marriages, painting them with the moſt expreſſive energy. Here, for a time, ended our communications on the ſubject of love and Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange*.

My father, ſoon after, deſired to know my opinion of that young lady; the fear of his reſentment made me heſitate, but he ſoon brought me to an explanation, by adding, "There was no young woman whom he ſhould prefer to her for his daughter-in-law—I underſtand ſhe is not indifferent to you—ſpeak plainly, can you love the amiable Adele?"

"I more than love—I adore Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange*!" cried I, with avidity. "Ah!" cried my father, "then you fulfil the wiſhes of her mother and myſelf; we deſire to ripen this mutual preference, and, on one condition, Adele is your wife." I aſſured him there could be no condition to which I was not ready to ſubmit for ſo gracious a reward; and he told me I muſt return

return to Paris, as the only place where I might, with profit, ſtudy the duties of that ſituation to which, on his death, I ſhould find myſelf exalted. To me this command appeared a harſh one, but I had given my word and durſt not recal it: he ſaw the violence I did to my heart, by the ſacrifice he demanded of me, and had the goodneſs to aſſure me that, at the expiration of one year, I ſhould return and become the huſband of Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange*, which made me quit his preſence the moſt tranſported of men.

I would not ſpeak of this projected marriage to Longuville, leſt, ill as he thought of it, he might endeavour to prevent my father's intentions; I only told him of our intended journey to Paris; that we were ſtill to live like brothers, to lodge in the ſame houſe, and to be recommended, by our common father, to the care and friendſhip of the beſt man in the world, his very particular acquaintance—the name of this gentleman was *De Calegieux*, counſellor of parliament, and a very wiſe old ſenator.

Whilſt I was ſpeaking his countenance betrayed ſymptoms of vexation; he did not even ſay he was pleaſed that we were to purſue our ſtudies together; but when I mentioned that we were to begin our journey the next morning, he turned extremely

tremely pale, and only ſaying, if that was the caſe, he muſt order his ſervant to make ready, he left me abruptly, and, for the remainder of the day, we were not alone together. In the evening we were to carry our adieus to Madame and Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange*, where, I can only ſay, I did not receive, from the charming Adele, any of thoſe delicate indications of that particular preference with which my father had too much flattered my expectations; her impenetrable coldneſs made me feel that I was not near her heart—I ſuppoſed myſelf injured by her want of ſenſibility—I could not hide my chagrin; her mother took notice of it; and, as we got up, ſhe opened her arms, and preſſing me between them, repeatedly called me her dear ſon, ordering Adele to permit that I ſhould embrace her, which ſhe poſitively and angrily refuſed to do; her mother perſiſted, and, at laſt, ſo far conquered her obſtinacy, that Adele condeſcended, very coldly, to receive my awkward, my embarraſſed farewel; as to my friend, ſhe made no difficulty in accepting it from him.

During our journey to Paris, Longuville ſeemed to have entirely loſt his ſpirits; and, on our arrival there, they were not at all mended. Once I heard him exclaiming,

claiming, as I came into his apartment, "Great God! what an unfortunate wretch am I!—" Of what ill fortune do you complain," ſaid I, "which you will not diſcloſe to the friend who tenderly loves you?"—"Oh! nothing," he replied, "only my health is faſt falling into decay; I am ſubject to tremblings, palpitations, and all ſorts of diſquietudes, which prevent me from repoſe by day, or ſleep by night." I laughed, and told him he was troubled with the vapours. "The vapours!" he retorted angrily; "you are very cruel, Monſieur—very inhuman." "Pardon me, dear Longuville," cried I; "can you ſuppoſe I meant any thing but to drag you out of your dejection."—"Well, well, it may be ſo—but you are happy, I am miſerable; for this reaſon it is that we do not underſtand each other."

We had not been more than two months under the roof of M. *De Calegieux*, when the melancholy that oppreſſed my companion had like to have met a fatal termination; he was taken extremely ill, and the phyſicians, who were conſulted on his malady, aſſured me, that their patient had ſome concealed grief, which, if not revealed to them, the whole college united could do nothing to ſave him from the grave!

Alarmed

Alarmed at this report, I re-took my ſtation by his bed-ſide, which I never quitted, day or night, except to talk with the doctors apart.

I found him juſt awakened from an unquiet ſlumber; "Longuville," ſaid I, taking one of his cold clammy hands, which I preſſed between my own, "does a friendſhip, ſo immutable as what I feel for you, demand no confidence in return? are you reſolved to die, and to hide from me the cauſe of your death? Ah! ſpeak—deareſt, beſt, beloved Longuville?—tell me what it is that preys upon your diſtempered mind?—if your life could be prolonged, without giving up this fatal ſecret, I would not demand it of you—Oh! that it depended on me to preſerve a life ſo dear to me."

"You love me," ſaid he, in a feeble voice, and a preſſure of my hand quite as feeble; "yes, you love me; you may ſerve me—you may ſave me."

"Suſpenſe in our ſituation—there is no time for indulging—tell me what I am to do—and judge whether I ſhall refuſe any thing that you can aſk of me?"

After a thouſand efforts to ſpeak, which were interrupted by fainting fits, he announced the words love and deſpair—immediately it ſtruck me that he loved Mademoiſelle

moiſelle *De Myrſange;* and, at the moment, I thought I could have reſigned her to him, rather than ſee him expire for her; my heart felt a degree of joy, which it never before or ſince experienced, when he recovered ſtrength to give me the particulars which I am now going to repeat.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

ANOTHER TALE.

"KNOW, dear Dorance," ſaid the dying Longuville, "that on our arrival at Grenoble I flew to viſit one of my relations, named Madame des Roches; at her houſe I met a reſpectable old man, who had with him a daughter; this lovely girl was no more than ſixteen! O Dorance! Dorance! never was beauty half ſo captivating—never talents half ſo brilliant—never graces half ſo raviſhing. Ah! pardon what you will be apt to call a ſlight upon the charms, the endowments of your Adele, you know my opinion of that little perſon—yet I do not deny that ſhe is handſome—but indeed, indeed her light flaxen hair gives an inſignificance to her features, which the dark gloſſy ringlets of my Roſine does not convey to her animated countenance."

He ſtopped—he had raved himſelf out of breath—his head fell back on the pillow—his eyes cloſed, and it was ſome minutes before he could proceed with his narrative: at laſt he turned again towards me, and continued ſpeaking.

"My

"My relation, Madame des Roches, as ſoon as her viſitors were gone, informed me that the ſweet object of my adoration was promiſed in marriage, and againſt her inclinations, to a young Colonel—that her father, covetous and ambitious, was then in the town, and that the match would ſoon be accompliſhed. Madame des Roches ſaw my diſtreſs—ſhe loved me as you love me, and ſhe pitied me as you pity me. At her houſe I often ſaw my charming miſtreſs, whoſe heart had ſurrendered to me in defiance of a prior engagement, made without its own conſent. Ah! my Dorance, behold the cauſe of that reluctance with which I tore myſelf from Grenoble—of the melancholy with which you have ſince ſo often accuſed me—of my ſickneſs—and perhaps of my death."

"Fear nothing," ſaid I; "now that we know your diſorder, we may next find a remedy for it, either in good fortune or philoſophy."

"Let it be in the former," cried he, "in the latter I ſhall ſeek for it to no purpoſe." He took another gaſping time, and then returned to his ſubject—"The evening before our departure from Grenoble the enchantreſs ſaid to me, whilſt rivers of tears deluged her bluſhing cheeks,

'Dear

'Dear Longuville, we muſt be for ever miſerable; my father has this very day declared to me in form, that at the end of one year he will preſent my hand to the Colonel, who can never be to me any thing but an object of deteſtation—he is going,' added ſhe, 'to make one campaign, and when he comes back—O Longuville'——I interrupted her, and we mingled our tears together. In this deplorable ſtate I was forced to leave my ſoul's deareſt treaſure—I had not courage to reſiſt the commands of your father, whoſe goodneſs has taught me to conſider him as my own, and at the riſk of my ſenſes I accompanied you to Paris—the only comfort I brought away from Grenoble was the promiſe of Roſine, that ſhe would write to me, and a fortnight ago I received this letter from her," taking a folded paper from his boſom—I offered to ſpare him the fatigue of reading, but he choſe the office, ſaying it would very much relieve him to retrace the characters which ſhe had written—theſe, as nearly as I can remember, were the contents:

LETTER.

"PARDON, dear Longuville, that I have not written to you ſooner; my father watches me without ceaſing, and ſince the departure of the hateful Colonel he has been at my elbow every moment—I have not ſo much as been able to ſee Madame des Roches. Can you gueſs what a ſacrifice is expected from the poor Roſine—how can I tell it you—I am to be placed in a convent till the horrible Colonel comes back to claim me as his property. I retard as much as I can the moment of my captivity; but, alas! it will come—write to me—there is no other conſolation left for the wretched Roſine."

Longuville having by great exertion brought his eyes to the ſignature of her name, he replaced it in his boſom, and ſpoke no more for nearly half an hour; then, at a moment when I was plunged in a deep reverie, he made me ſtart, by calling out in a quick voice, "Dorance! Dorance! it is this letter which cauſes my illneſs, which will cauſe my death, unleſs you have the goodneſs to write for me; you are very ſenſible how much it is out of my power to guide a pen, and it is your

condeſcenſion only that can ſave me from thoſe excruciating torments that will not let me recover, though I wiſh to live at leaſt till I ſhall have convinced you of my friendſhip and my gratitude."

I readily agreed to his requeſt—the materials for writing were ſet before me, and, as he was able to dictate, my pen made the expreſſion of his ſentiments, but not without ſome conſiderable pauſes.

CHAP. XXV.

A LETTER FROM THE SICK BED.

"OH! what pain, my dear, my gentle miſtreſs, did your letter convey to the bleeding heart of your devoted Longuville —*you* ſhut up in a convent—you in one year to be liberated by my rival—periſh firſt that rival—periſh the whole world before I will ſubmit to loſe you—we love each other, and death only is ſtrong enough to diſunite us—the obſtacles by which we have been ſevered, would, I thought, have coſt me my life—I have been at the gates of death; but a ſincere friend, whoſe heart is excellent, has by his kindneſs delivered me from the tomb —to this friend I have confided our ſituation—he is another ſelf—without knowing you, he partakes of our mutual woes —it is this very friend, whoſe hand is now tracing thoſe characters of which my own, debilitated by ſickneſs, is totally incapable —if heaven reſtores me to health, I ſhall go ſecretly to Grenoble."

Here I interrupted him to aſk what he meant by that ſentence, but he prayed me to proceed, and promiſed he would explain

plain himſelf as ſoon as the letter was finiſhed. I would by no means thwart him in the weak condition to which I ſaw him reduced, and continued writing after his own words.

"I ſhall go to the houſe of Madame des Roches—I ſhall remain with her ſome time, where I hope often to have the felicity of beholding you, and to renew thoſe vows of everlaſting love, which on my part never, never ſhall be broken—this hope reanimates me—I think of you—my woes are forgotten."

Here ended the letter—Longuville made every exertion to ſign his name, but the writing was hardly legible. I afterwards ſealed, and by his direction addreſſed on the cover—To Madame des Roches, rue Perriere à Grenoble.

As ſoon as this buſineſs was finiſhed, one would have thought a ſalutary balm had circulated through his whole tottering frame—his eyes were reſtored to ſome part of their vivacity—his lips were tinged with crimſon—but he added, as he fervently preſſed my hand, in token of his gratitude, "This, my dear Dorance, is not the only ſervice I expect from you—you have given me life, but, if you deſire that I ſhould enjoy it, you muſt permit me to ſteal away to Grenoble to ſee my divine Roſine."

"How is this poſſible?" ſaid I.

"It is very poſſible," he replied, "if we work together; I foreſee your objections allow me to obviate them—whilſt I am there you muſt write to your father that I am getting better, or what you pleaſe; I will alſo ſend you letters from thence, that you might incloſe them to him."

I felt my face glow with indignation at a project ſo full of deceit, and refuſed it altogether; my firmneſs brought on his fits with more violence than ever; his phrenſy was ſo great every time he came out of them, that there was plainly no alternative—I muſt loſe my friend, or I muſt degrade myſelf—I was not long undetermined; both were terrible, but I did not chuſe to be the murderer of him whom I dearly loved—I promiſed—he revived, and from that hour his recovery was aſtoniſhingly rapid.

The day before he ſet off for Grenoble he ſaid to M. de Calegieux, that he was going to recover his ſtrength at a hermitage near Auvegne, and that his return ſhould not be protracted above two months —"It is uſeleſs," he added, "to inform our father Dorance of this, becauſe he may diſturb himſelf by ſuppoſing that my health is really worſe than I believe it to be,

be, though my conſtitution, ſo ſhattered by ſickneſs, muſt require a great deal of mending." M. de Calegieux was ſatisfied with his reaſoning, and he departed in high ſpirits.

At the end of two months I received a letter from him, the contents of which are for ever imprinted on my memory.

"My friend, I am the moſt happy of men; Roſine loves me—ſhe loves me for ever—her father has given up the convent ſcheme—but he watches her with the eyes of an Argus; yet love finds a way to elude his watchfulneſs—I ſee his charming daughter from time to time at the houſe of Madame des Roches, where I have been ſafely concealed ever ſince my arrival: not a ſoul in the town has ſeen me; the habitation of my relation is in fact an hermitage, where one might find all the pleaſures, and eſcape all the torments of life. I told you I was happy—I am far, very far from happy—that love which you ſo well underſtand yeſterday tied a bandage over our eyes—I thought I had made myſelf happy, but the extreme miſery into which I have plunged Roſine has convinced me that I am only guilty—ah! why did prudence deſert her for one moment—and why did I take advantage of that one weak moment—ah! my friend, give me all your eloquence to conſole the beauty

my paſſions have ſeduced. Roſine accuſes me of her misfortune—it is very certain ſhe cannot now be the wife of him for whom ſhe was deſtined—if I am not her huſband, ſhe dare not take any other. O that I could reanimate the virtue which has given way to my entreaties! O that I could reſtore to a drooping flower its original ſweetneſs, its firſt freſhneſs—alas! that I cannot do this—that I cannot give back her innocence, drives her to deſpair, and her reproaches diſtract me.——Dorance, my dear Dorance, pity me—write to me—if poſſible, conſole me—though my own affair ſo much engages me, I muſt tell you what is ſaid of your Adele—it is reported of her that ſhe is tormented with a chagrin, for which ſhe will not, and her friends cannot, account—ſhe is become clumſy, pouting, and grumbles at all the world—there are ſuch ſcenes every day between her and her mother—my friend, I no longer blame you for loving—but if you ſhould not be favoured with a return, it will be no great wonder, for Mademoiſelle de Myrſange, if report ſpeaks truth, hates every body—you know my opinion—it is always the ſame—adieu—and reflect.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

WE PROCEED IN THE MEMOIR.

I FELT ſenſibly the whole effect of my conduct by the receipt of Longuville's letter; I even accuſed myſelf as being acceſſary to his crime of ſeduction in having aided his hypocriſy—another idea tormented me; I was divided in my opinion whether it was not my duty to inform the Colonel of the treſpaſs that had been committed on his honour, and to hinder an honeſt man from being ſo cruelly deceived—but again I conſidered that I was the vile agent of a crime which would cover my whole days with diſhonour. I could yet determine on nothing, except to upbraid Longuville, to whom I wrote with all the ſeverity of offended probity; I bade him chuſe a confidant as worthleſs as himſelf, and commanded him neither to write nor ſpeak to me any more.

I heard nothing from him for the ſpace of four months, at which period I received, from Madame *De Myrſange*, the afflicting news that my father was no more: this terrible intelligence haſtened me to

Grenoble, and I found the paternal manſion once ſo pleaſant, in a ſtate of deplorable ſadneſs; I could not bear the thought of making it my reſidence—I had but few relations in the town, and reſolved to quit it as ſoon as I had received the hand of Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange*.

Though I had forbidden Longuville to intrude on me, I thought him extremely ungrateful, knowing I was in the ſame place where he had concealed himſelf, that he did not take ſome ſteps towards a reconciliation; I felt that I wiſhed to grant him my pardon; I even went to that part of the town where I knew the houſe of *Madame des Roches* was ſituated—I learnt, in that neighbourhood, of her having quitted her reſidence there eight days before my arrival at Grenoble, and I entertained no doubt but that ſhe had taken with her the guilty, unfortunate lovers; neither could I get any intelligence of the old man, father of Roſine; indeed I did not know by what name to inquire, and, for fear of betraying the abominable ſecret, the queſtions I aſked were ſo vague, that I did not expect they would bring me much information.

On my return to Grenoble I flew to viſit my miſtreſs; alas! I found that ſhe too well anſwered the deſcription given of her by Longuville, her perſon, as well as her

her manners, having undergone a total revolution; ſhe was grown fat, and dreſſed with careleſſneſs; ſhe was always out of humour, and diſcontented with every body; however, in preſence of her mother, ſhe treated me with a ſort of conſtrained civility, which made it impoſſible for me to diſengage myſelf from the contract entered into by my father—I wondered how it was poſſible that I ſhould ever have loved her?

I very often endeavoured to prove the nature of thoſe ſentiments ſhe entertained for me, and if it appeared that ſhe had no partiality in my favour, it was alſo equally clear that ſhe had no repugnance to eſpouſing me. The day, the hour of our union arrived; I conducted Mademoiſelle *De Myrſange* to the altar without joy, without grief—but with a ſentiment of the moſt perfect indifference.

We were attended to church by a few of our friends; on our return home my wife demanded a private interview of me and her mother, which we readily granted—her firſt action filled us with aſtoniſhment—ſhe threw herſelf at our feet, her eyes ſtreaming with tears!

"My mother!" ſaid ſhe, "*you* have conſtrained me to marry Monſieur—*you* know what combats I have gone through to obey you—recollect how often I have been

been repulſed from your boſom—huſband! mother! in the name of heaven—Oh! in the merciful name of God! let me be my own miſtreſs till I have made myſelf worthy of the bleſſing I know you, in your goodneſs, intend for me—it is my own fault that I do not, at this moment, think myſelf the happieſt of women—allow me a little time to inſure my affections, to teach them obedience; I aſk only for two months of reflection—Oh! my mother, and you, Monſieur, grant this petition, and ſave me from diſtraction!—let me, for the time I have propoſed, retire to your ſiſter, my kind, my reſpectable aunt, at St. Marcellin—let me be my own miſtreſs—let me receive no viſits from my huſband."

Strange as this requeſt appeared, and mortifying as ſtrange, yet I agreed to it without doing my heart much violence: I preſented my hand, and forced her to riſe; I ſtrove to ſoften Madame *De Myrſange*, who loaded her ſuppliant daughter with reproaches, and, at laſt, wrung from her a reluctant conſent, but not till I had caſt on her ſome ſharp reflections for that conduct of which Adele had complained, not more injurious to her than to myſelf.

"Monſieur," ſaid her mother, haughtily, "do as you pleaſe, you have now the

the ſole right over her conduct—the part, of which you both accuſe me, was taken with a view to your mutual felicity—ſhe has made the miſery of my old age—here I reſign my power—let her go, or let her ſtay, this is the laſt moment in which I will ſee her face, or hear the ſound of her voice:"—ſaying this, ſhe ſuddenly quitted the room, and afterwards refuſed a letter, which I aſked of her, to introduce the poor Adele to her ſiſter Madame *De Reigny*. Within an hour ſhe ſet out in my carriage with her maid; I went out of town with her a few miles, ſo that it was ſuppoſed we were together; and when I choſe to have it known that I was come back, which was not till ſeveral days after, I pretended to have been recalled by buſineſs, and that I had left my wife with her aunt.

Adele ſent me, by the return of the carriage, a letter filled with thanks for my indulgence, and aſſurances that the generoſity of my conduct ſhould never be obliterated from her memory, nay, ſhe ventured to promiſe me the poſſeſſion of a heart which was already beginning to intereſt itſelf for my happineſs.

A huſband without a wife, I hardly knew how to diſpoſe of myſelf; I therefore continued another month at Grenoble, and did all I could to raiſe the ſpirits of

of Madame *De Myrſange*—but in vain were my efforts—her remorſe at having forced her daughter's inclinations, and for the vow ſhe had taken never more to behold that beloved child, broke her heart, and, at the end of a month, I had the affliction to ſee her expire—tho' ſhe would not ſee, ſhe forgave her daughter, and died pronouncing on her both the moſt ardent and the moſt tender bleſſings.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

A VISIT TO THE BRIDE.

FROM this time my reſidence at Grenoble became extremely inſipid, and I reſolved to fix myſelf at Paris. I often thought of my wife, but I thought of her only with compaſſion; as I was her huſband I wiſhed to perſuade her that we might make but one family, and that ſhe would go with me to Paris; with this intention I went to St. Marcellin—my viſit was preceded by a billet, that ſhe might be allowed a day or two to prepare herſelf for expecting me.

On arriving at the houſe of my wife's aunt I was received by a niece of her late huſband's, a Madame de Raymond, whom I had never ſeen; but ſhe had a freedom in her manner that made her addreſs me as if our acquaintance had been of a long ſtanding.

"My dear Monſieur," ſaid ſhe, kiſſing my cheeks one after the other, I am quite glad you are come; ever ſince the receipt of your melancholy epiſtle about the old lady's

lady's death, poor Madame Dorance has been ſo ill, we all thought ſhe would have died—in vain my aunt and I have tried to conſole her, poor little woman, but you muſt go and ſee her—you cannot think how very ill ſhe is—you will find my aunt at her pillow, for ſhe never ſtirs from her a moment."

This lady talked ſo faſt, and ſo much, that ſhe did not ſeem to deſire or expect an anſwer, ſo I followed her to my wife's apartment, without ſpeaking; for the alarm I felt on hearing this once beloved Adele was in danger convinced me that it was in her power to reclaim my heart, whenever ſhe offered me her own in exchange for it.

As I approached my wife I ſaw her poor old aunt, who from age and infirmities ſeemed to totter on the brink of eternity, ſitting by the ſide of the bed, and holding one of Adele's hands—this good lady, who was almoſt blind, could not ſee me, yet hearing I was in the chamber, ſhe would have got up to give me a cordial welcome, but I prevented her; and kneeling by her, taking the hand ſhe held, which I tenderly preſſed to my lips, I ſpoke to my wife in the moſt tender and ſoothing accents, I aſſured her of her mother's forgiveneſs: "And now," ſaid I, "except your aunt and myſelf, that you have not

not another friend in the world, I hope ſhe will have the goodneſs to reſign you to my tender care, and that you will no longer have any objection to putting yourſelf under my protection."

"Alas!" ſhe replied, in a mournful tone, her voice languid and feeble—"alas! you are too good—the ſlights I have ſhewn you will fill me with eternal remorſe—yet I muſt ſtill intrude on your patience—you ſee to what an extremity grief has reduced me—ſpare me then the time that yet remains of what you allowed me—give me theſe precious moments to lament the loſs of the beſt, the deareſt of mothers—dear Dorance, refuſe not my petition, it is not dictated by indifference—that has been already conquered by your generoſity—go, dear huſband—go—when next you ſee your Adele, you ſhall not find her unjuſt or ungrateful."

She was covered with tears—there was no reſiſting her pathetic eloquence: I promiſed every thing ſhe aſked of me—recommended her to the care of her reſpectable aunt, and departed from the houſe as much in love as in the days of our early acquaintance.

I could not but obſerve that the flippant lady, by whom I was firſt received, ſeemed to take a great deal of notice of every thing that paſſed between me and my wife; not

not a word did ſhe loſe for want of attention; ſhe congratulated me a thouſand times, whilſt I was taking ſome refreſhment, on the felicity that was in ſtore for me with ſo ſweet and charming a wife as her dear little friend, and paid me numberleſs ſtrange incoherent compliments, which ſeemed to have in them a mixture of ſome confuſion.

From St. Marcellin I proceeded to Paris, where I hired a houſe in the *rue de Grenelle St. Honoré*, where I ſoon after very unexpectedly received a letter from Longuville, which had been at Grenoble, and was ſent to me from thence.

This letter began with the moſt penitent ſubmiſſion for his paſt offences, and the warmeſt entreaties that I would reſtore to him my too juſtly forfeited friendſhip; he then begs permiſſion to lay before me his paſt and preſent ſituation, continuing his epiſtle in theſe words: "Some days prior to the death of your good father, my intrigue with Roſine was diſcovered by her father, upon which he hurried her to a lodging at *Bourg de Oyſans*, which, as you know, is near Grenoble." Madame des Roches, on hearing this news, did nothing but ſtun my ears with her upbraidings, whilſt the father menaced my life—deſpair affected my ſenſes—my relation was moved with pity—ſhe made me leave that place,

and

and was herſelf the companion of my flight—you had forbidden me to approach either in perſon, or by my pen—I am not yet of a ſound mind—I break through all reſtraints to pour out my complaints—to die if you refuſe to hear them—Roſine—my Roſine is going to eſpouſe the Colonel—but—how dare I avow it—ſhe is—the dear creature—yes, ſhe is with child—I am more than half mad——."

I ſhed many tears over this deranged compoſition—I ſincerely pitied the diſtracted writer, but could not aſſiſt him; had I been able, and inclined to do ſo, he had given me no addreſs by which I might find his reſidence.

The time of our ſeparation was nearly half elapſed—my wife, with whom I kept up a tender and regular correſpondence, gave me the pleaſing intelligence that her ſpirits, as well as health, were improving ſo faſt ſhe could no longer deny herſelf the felicity of joining me, and of proving to the end of her life how much her whole heart was devoted to my happineſs, fixing the day of her being at Paris at the diſtance of a fortnight—my paſſion, my affections for her, had long been rekindled, and my tranſports at the approach of this union were exquiſite.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE PRESENT.

ONE week before I expected this dear wife, when I was very busy in arranging every thing in my family for her reception, a peasant, who would not be refused admittance, forced himself into my presence. I demanded his business—in answer to which he only delivered me a letter—I saw it was the hand of Longuville; and tearing asunder the seal, I read with impatience to this effect:—that he had found out my residence was changed from Grenoble to Paris—that Rosine had made him a father—a beautiful female infant, whom it was necessary should never, never meet the fatal glances of its grandfather, or the Colonel, who within a few days would become the husband of its mother. "If your heart," said he, "if your delicacy should refuse to aid us in this emergency—if your humanity is deaf to the pleadings of misery—if you do not name at the baptismal font this dear innocent pledge of a guilty passion—if you do not stand forth

forth her adopted father, there can be but *one* reſource left for her :—ah! how dreadful is that *one*—to be conſigned to a charitable aſylum for victims and vagabonds. O God! there is no, no ſupporting the idea."

I read no farther, but turning haſtily, aſked the man who delivered me the letter, if he was charged with any other commiſſion.

" Yes, maſter; I have a little baby, if your honour has got any mind to it."—

" Poor child," I exclaimed, " and where have you diſpoſed of it?"

" In your own court, Monſieur; I brought it ſo far under my coat."

" In my court—but what ſcandal—what indecency—how imprudent. My God!—how can I avoid my fate? what ſhall I do?—what will become of it?"

" Sir, you are only to ſay the word, and I will bring you this foundling. Speak, Monſieur, and it will be done preſently."

" Yes—no—go—ſtay—yes—where are you running—ſtop." My ſpeech and my heart went together; both were trembling, both undetermined, when a neat countrywoman entered, and threw into my arms the loveliеſt little infant my eyes ever beheld.

" Take

"Take it, my good Sir," cried ſhe, "it is a *God's ſend*—you will proſper the better for loving it—poor little creature—you cannot have the heart to ſend it away. I aſſure you, Monſieur, it is nothing to me and my ſpouſe—it is none of mine, as Jacques can tell very well—for all that, it is a poor little creature."

"*Poor little creature*," repeated I, "thou art indeed a poor little creature." It drew a deep ſigh—it fixed its plaintive eyes on my face: "Yes, angel," cried I, "thou ſhalt not want a father." From that moment I took her to my boſom—I planted her in my heart—I diſmiſſed the man with a gratuity, but retained his wife to take care of my new charge, who had been its nurſe from its birth.

"Monſieur," ſaid ſhe, "this pretty child has not yet been baptized; it is only fourteen days old."

"We muſt name it then," I replied; "you and I will anſwer for it—but what turn can I give to this adventure? What will the world think of me?"

"You have only to ſay," replied ſhe, "that you have found and adopted a child of poverty, a deſerted infant; and if the world do not reverence your piety, their good-will is not worth the having."

I followed her advice, and the curate of the pariſh, to whom I recounted my adventure,

venture, ſanctioned my honeſt intentions with his full approbation; the ſame night himſelf baptized in due form my adopted daughter by the name of——.

Here the recital was interrupted by Marienna's falling down at the feet of the narrator, claſping his knees, and exclaiming—"Oh, my father!—oh, Monſieur! I know not which to call you—ſomething tells me that I am your child by charity, and not by nature—am I not that fortunate, unfortunate—am I not the innocent offspring of——."

In her turn ſhe was interrupted by Villeroy, who, as William raiſed and preſſed her to his heart, bid her calm her agitation, for though ſhe in fact was not his daughter, but the daughter of Longuville, he hoped he had ſo well acquitted himſelf in the paternal character, that in preference to all mankind ſhe would feel for him the love, the duty, and the obedience, which would have been his due from her if he had really been her father. "Alas!" added he, "your birth was your *misfortune*—to diſpute my will would be your *crime*."

"Never, never," cried ſhe, throwing herſelf on his neck, and wetting his boſom with her tears, "never will I look, or ſpeak, or think in oppoſition to your commands. O Heavens! what goodneſs—what

what generoſity—deareſt, deareſt father, you will kill me if you do not let me call you father!"

Villeroy kindly claſped her to his heart—it was as much as if he had ſpoke a volume. He ſmiled, but there was ſomething uncommon in his ſmile—perhaps he thought of Longuville—perhaps it was the more languid from the fatigue of much talking. He called for ſome refreſhment, and proceeded no farther in his ſtory till they had all recruited their ſtrength and their ſpirits.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

VILLEROY'S NARRATIVE GOES ON.

I WAS ſomewhat embarraſſed how to preſent my little foundling to my wife, leſt ſhe might take it into her head that I was in reality the father of it; but all my apprehenſions vaniſhed when ſhe gave herſelf to my arms, adorable in mind and perſon, with the gentleneſs of an angel ſhe not only heard me relate my adventure, but adopted her with as much fondneſs as I had done, and for ſix years our happineſs was not to be equalled.

All the love that we could ſpare from each other was laviſhed on the child of our adoption; ſhe always called Adele her mamma, and never did mother acquit herſelf more truly of the maternal character—it was now that we began to commence Marienna's education, by placing her at the convent of *Des Dames de St. Aure ſue Du Temple.*

About this time my wife gave me a ſon.——Villeroy ſtopped—he wept—he groaned—he remained ſilent ſeveral minutes—"I am unmanned," ſaid he; "the

part on which I am approaching is agony —pray that I might be enabled to relate it to you with calmneſs?"

Being told that the houſe my father occupied at Grenoble, which was ſold by me on his death, was again offered to ſale, I ſignified to Adele that I ſhould like to become the purchaſer; at firſt ſhe oppoſed my intention, but, at laſt, entered into my plan; we left Paris, ſhe nurſing, at her lovely boſom, the pledge of our mutual affection.

After our arrival at Grenoble I was extremely buſy, for eight days, in making an agreement with the magiſtrates for a charge, of which I felt myſelf ambitious, becauſe it had belonged to my father. I was in the midſt of this buſineſs, when a large packet being put into my hands, I careleſsly conſigned it to my pocket for the inſpection of a more leiſure moment; when I returned home I retired to my cloſet for the purpoſe of reading what it might contain—but, on ſurveying the packet, it is impoſſible to deſcribe my unaccountable emotions——ſuch a coldneſs ſeized upon my whole frame as if the vital circulation of my blood had been frozen up—my heart whiſpered me that I ſhould have nothing to do with this fatal letter—alas! my fingers were not obedient to the

counſel of my heart; they had already tremblingly divided the ſeal, and my aching ſight had caſt itſelf on theſe odious contents:

LETTER.

Paris, 8—

"Monſieur, I am no longer worthy to call you my friend—I approach that awful period in which I am to give up the account of my actions at the bar of heaven—I am dying—one wiſh for life only remains to me—it is to receive your pardon for the crimes I have committed againſt you—this I can only do by the hand of another, and, before it reaches you, the miſerable writer will be no more! Hear then, and tremble for the eternal puniſhment to which my paſſions have conſigned all that is immortal in my nature—your Adele and my Roſine are one and the ſame perſon—the child you nurſe with ſo much tenderneſs is the fruit of our criminality."

Marienna gave a loud cry, and ran out of the room—William would have followed to conſole her grief, but Villeroy bade him ſtay, with an air ſo ſtern, that he did not dare to diſobey him—the old man ſeemed to be choaked with rage,

and, with ſome difficulty, continued his reading.

" Yes, Dorance, on the ſalvation of a dying man, your wife is the mother, as I am the father of Marienna—would to God this was our only crime—but the ſon you ſo tenderly love has no other parent than our guilty ſelves—like the other, he has no claim upon *you*, except of compaſſion—ſhe will atteſt to this truth—I was concealed at Paris, and this boy was the fruit of our private interviews. That Madame *Des Roches* was a name only aſſumed, by the worſt of women, for the worſt of purpoſes—her real name is Madame De Raymon—you ſaw this wretched pander of our vices when you viſited Adele at her aunt's—that good woman was cheated as well as yourſelf, and, being not only blind, but reduced to a ſecond ſtate of infancy, ſhe did not know this deteſtable relation of a huſband, whoſe memory ſhe honored, had dared to turn her houſe into a receptacle for two adulterous lovers—the letters of Adele, which you will receive, as well as my anſwers to them, together with what I am dictating in the very arms of death—Ah! Dorance, at this moment he preſſes me ſo cloſe that I cannot"——Afterwards was added, in the ſame hand—" Alas! Monſieur, the guilty, the penitent, the wretched

wretched Longuville has no longer an exiſtence in this world—may he find mercy in another."

"Great God! exclaimed William, "why does he not yet live, that I might wreak my vengeance on the execrable villany of ſuch a monſter?"

Theſe words ſeemed to convey ſomething like pleaſure to the countenance of Villeroy; he wrung the hands of his young friend, and bidding him remember them, proceeded in his memoir.

I examined all the letters to which he had referred me—it was too plain who was the mother of Marienna; neither could I doubt that Jules was indebted for his birth to the ſame father; the letters incloſed made no mention of this moſt horrible fact—but, in the moment of death, Longuville himſelf had confeſſed that I was not the author of its exiſtence.—Like a lioneſs robbed of her whelps, I flew to my wife's apartment—ſhe is not there—I ſearch for her over the houſe—ſhe has diſappeared—ſhe is gone, and has made the boy of Longuville the partner of her flight! —I ran franticly back to her chamber—I look every where about it—I do not know for what—at laſt this paper I picked up; it had fallen under the table, and, by deſign, ſhe had left it behind her.—Hear the contents:

BILLET.

"Fly, unfortunate Adele, your huſband knows all—fly, and recognize your old friend *Des Roches* in the maternal ſervice ſhe is now rendering you."——To which was added, in my wife's writing—"Adieu! beloved Dorance; never ſhall you again behold the wife who has wronged you."

I informed myſelf, by inquiries, of what route ſhe had taken—I mounted my horſe, and flew after her like a madman.—I entered into this foreſt—a man, who obſerved I was ſeeking for ſomething, ſtopped me, ſaying, if I was in purſuit of a poſt-chaiſe, I ſhould get up with it near the Star. Rejoicing at this intelligence, I ſpurred on my horſe till I perceived, at a ſmall diſtance, a chaiſe that had overſet, and Adele, with Jules in her arms, ſtanding by the ſide of it, whilſt Germain, my truſty ſervant, my confidential friend, was trying to lift up the carriage. How did this ſight add to my fury!—was it poſſible that Germain too ſhould prove a traitor to his maſter. I aſked no more queſtions of my heart; but coming behind them, with my ſword drawn, I plunged it deep into the boſom of both mother and infant—Germain ran towards

towards me—"Keep off, wretch," cried I; "and tremble for thy own life."——"Oh, my maſter!" he cried—"you have killed your penitent wife—you have killed your own innocent babe." The dying martyr lifted her hands to heaven—"I deſerve death at your hands, but your child has never offended—that God who calls me hence, who has accepted my tears and groans of penitence, witneſs for me that, ſince the time I lived with you, I have never once ſeen the foe of my honour, the perfidious Longuville!—unhappy huſband, I love thee, even in death—try to forget, if poſſible, that thou haſt ſhed the blood of thy ſon!"—The laſt word quivered on her lips, and they cloſed for ever. The torments of the damned were eaſe to thoſe which ſeized upon my ſoul at the final cloſe of this horrible ſcene—Germain had no comfort to beſtow on me—he fell on the victims of my vengeance—he embraced their breathleſs forms till he was himſelf covered with their blood. I would have completed my work, I was going to ſtab him on the ſpot; but riſing, and wreſting the weapon from my graſp—"Stay," cried he, "till I have told thee all—and afterwards take my life if you think I have deſerved to loſe it." I bade him ſpeak. "This morning," ſaid he, "my lady came to ſeek me in an agony of terror; 'Ger-

main,' ſaid ſhe, falling at my feet, 'ſave my life—ſave the life of your maſter—ſave the life of our ſon! Before I married Dorance I committed a horrid crime, of which he is going to be informed—Oh! fly—hide me, hide me, or we ſhall fall the victims of his fury!' Her prayers, her tears prevailed, but not till ſhe had me convinced that Jules was your child—that ſhe never had ſeen her ſeducer ſince ſhe became your wife; and that he had been, from that time, in America, whither he had gone on her invoking the judgments of heaven on her head if ſhe ever permitted him to ſee her again, or if ever ſhe proved unfaithful to her nuptial vows. When ſatisfied of her innocent intentions, fearing a purſuit, I conducted her to the thickeſt of the foreſt, there to leave her till I could return and try to ſoften your heart in her favour—you know the reſt—and now kill me, for I am tired of my exiſtence." His words carried conviction to my ſenſes—I fell on his neck—I paſs over what immediately followed—it was he who would have ſaved the life of my victims that now prevented me from putting an end to my own.

All at once a calm ſeemed to ſpread itſelf over my ſoul—"Germain," ſaid I, "mankind have betrayed me; I will no more rejoin them—here I will bury my wife

wife—here my ſon ſhall be entombed—and here we will live to feed on the luxury of our ſorrows." Germain was as willing as myſelf to adopt my ſcheme, and we agreed to keep the whole of this bloody tranſaction a ſecret.

The next morning this dear friend went to Grenoble to ſettle my affairs, and to make believe that I was retired, with my family, to a diſtant province, whilſt I remained in the foreſt to weep over thoſe dear bodies which, during the night, we had repoſed under the foot of the great poplar.

I had one friend, beſides Germain, to whom I committed my misfortunes, it was the Duke de ****, governor of Dauphiné; he heard me with more than compaſſion, and offered me a retreat in the foreſt of Chamboran; but knowing me long, and loving me well, he firſt uſed all his eloquence, to turn me from my romantic purpoſe, and when he found me ſtill unſhaken, he aſſiſted me with his own people, and ſent all manner of materials to build my little fortreſs, after my own plan, without the town or its neighbourhood ſuſpecting any thing of the matter. All the time it was erecting I ſhut myſelf up in the ſame cavern which held the bodies of Adele and Jules, being firſt curiouſly embalmed

and placed in a coffin, ſo contrived as to render them impenetrable to air or wet—every thing has ſince been put into better order.

In looking over the papers my wife had in her pockets, I found a letter from Longuville, dated ſome weeks before my crime, by which he informed her of his having been ſettled five years in New Carolina, from whence he ſent her his wiſhes for the continuation of our mutual happineſs, and ſtrongly recommending their little Marienna to her motherly affection.

To be thus aſcertained, that the child I had murdered was my own, did not ſerve to eſtabliſh my peace—my whole undivided rage now fell upon that ſon of perdition, the damnable Longuville, who pretended to be dead only, if it were poſſible, that he might injure me more than ever—ah! too ſure, this deviliſh act was to wreak his vengeance on the head of that poor penitent, who would no longer admit him to her preſence. In the moment of my rage I cried out—"This Longuville has a daughter—I am the maſter of her fate—I will make it terrible as that of my ſlaughtered Jules; and, without opening my deſign to Germain, I took her from the convent, and brought her to this foreſt."

William

William ſtarted up, deſiring he might have leave to go and ſee what was become of her, as if he had ſuppoſed, even at this time, her life was in danger; ſuch an effect had the laſt words of Villeroy, or rather let us now call him Dorance, on the youth's terrified imagination.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

THE CONCLUSION.

"NO, my ſon, ſtay where you are," ſaid the old man; you have nothing to fear for the ſafety of Marienna; my own ſoul is not dearer to me than that beloved, that amiable child, yet my vengeance does not ſleep—nothing but blood will ſatisfy it—remember the noble words you uttered on hearing that the traitor who has injured me was no more—renounce them if you dare, and I renounce you for ever! —it was to accompliſh this great revenge that I received, careſſed, and proved your courage—whoever is the huſband of Marienna muſt be the executioner of her father—I do not mean by the dark path of treachery, but in the broad and open field of honour."

Marienna, who feared the diſpleaſure of Dorance if ſhe ſought to hide herſelf too long from his preſence, hearing him, as ſhe came back to the room, ſpeaking in a voice unuſually loud, ſhe ſtopped, trembling, on the outſide of the door, and heard, with phrenſy, that her lover was appointed to take the life of her father.

"William!

"William! William!" cried ſhe, burſting upon them with the ſuddenneſs of lightning, "ſay not that you will be the murderer of my father—and you, Monſieur, think not the miſerable girl you have charitably protected will become the reward of an action at which nature herſelf muſt ſhudder—he who preſerves, not he who deſtroys, my father ſhall be my huſband."

Dorance roſe up, and, without ſaying a word, walked angrily out of the chamber; Germain followed in hopes of appeaſing him; and our lovers being left to themſelves, William very ſoon found the means of reſtoring himſelf to the favour of his miſtreſs, and her to ſome degree of tranquillity.

When the little family reaſſembled themſelves together, few traces of ſadneſs faſtened on their countenances; Dorance was compoſed, nay even cheerful, and the others ſeemed tranſported at the change in his humour; he gave Marienna a thouſand tender careſſes, and received hers as if ſhe had never offended him.

In the evening he took William by the arm, and walked with him into the garden, where he ſpoke to him in this manner:—"That fooliſh girl has prevented me from ſpeaking the full of my mind to you; I have brought you hither that I might do it

it without interruption, and aſſure yourſelf there is no appeal from your ſentence —to-morrow, at dawn of day, you paſs the draw-bridge, which you ſhall never recroſs except it is to bring me back the head of Longuville." William, freezing with horror, would have replied, but was not permitted; that night they all aſſiſted at the ſolemn ceremony which had once ſo much terrified the poor William. Now that his whole ſoul was wrapped in deſpair at the thoughts of leaving Marienna, never perhaps to behold her any more, he regarded the ſame gloomy objects with almoſt total indifference; he even looked at the embalmed bodies contained in the coffin, and pierced with wounds, yet hardly knew that he had ſeen them; and when Dorance told him that this ceremony was performed annually, he ſtarted and replied—"Yes, Monſieur, I ſhall certainly obey you."

William, getting up at break of day, was ſurpriſed to find the family ready to embrace him, all but Marienna, who hid her face from him, and ſat drowned in her tears—"She knows of your journey," ſaid the old man; "but go, my ſon, I will take care of her until your return—you know on what conditions." William ſhook his head, and, falling at the feet of his miſtreſs, would have taken her hand,

hand, but ſhe refuſed to give it him; her whole frame was ſo agitated that ſhe was forced to be carried to her chamber: William bore her in his arms, and, in a whiſper deſigned only for her ear, he ſwore to preſerve the life of her father even at the expence of his; and, waiting until ſhe had a little recovered from her delirium, he ruſhed by the two old men without hearing or ſpeaking to them, and, like a bird that is juſt eſcaped from the net of the fowler, ſtruck into the foreſt, nor ſtopped running through brambles and briars till he came to ſeveral croſs roads—here he is ſurpriſed by a very ſingular noiſe; it ſeems to come from the earth—heavens! what did he behold!—what new adventure was he next to encounter!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

WILLIAM MEETS WITH A NEW FRIEND.

WHAT can be more intereſting to a reader of ſenſibility than the fate of a handſome youth, without houſe, without parents, without money, and without friends; let us then, unlike the reſt of the world, attach ourſelves to his misfortunes.

The fortreſs and Marienna were three miles in the rear of our adventurer, when he felt a ſort of fearful alarm at the very ſingular noiſe that ſeemed to proceed from the earth—he thought the ground on which he ſtood trembled under him, and he was certain the branches round him were ſtrangely fluctuating: whilſt all theſe appearances engroſſed his fixed attention, the mouth of a cavern opened at his ſide, and a ſort of ſpectre, or phantom, puſhed his head through the aperture, dragging after it a long lean body, which putting itſelf into an erect poſture, preſently convinced William it was only a man of the moſt inoffenſive and pitiable deſcription, whoſe face was pale and hagged, whoſe eyes were wild, hollow, and dull.

This

This poor wretch threw himſelf at the feet of our aſtoniſhed hero, crying out, "Save me, *Signor;* ſave me for the mercy of God!"

"Who are you?"

"An unfortunate—an *infelice Cavaliere*, who will attend you through life or death."

"Speak—explain yourſelf?"

"Firſt, dear good *Signor*, let us fly this curſed ſpot, or we ſhall be purſued."

"By whom?"

"By the raſcals I have ran from—in the name of Heaven, let us be gone—my external frightens you. *Le Verdo*, when you know *le povero Carlo Sciocco*, you will love him—yes, you will adore him."

Without that particular foible William had imbibed from education, if he had but as few ſuſpicions as other men, he muſt have been ſtartled at a figure ſo uncouth, and an addreſs ſo extraordinary: however, this poor wretch was alone, without arms: if an impoſtor, what harm could he do the intrepid William; beſides, his voice was ſoft, even to effeminacy—What then could William have to fear?—he followed the impulſe of his feeling, generous heart—he raiſed this deplorable ſon of famine, ſaying to him, "I agree to receive you as the companion of my travels, provided you recount to me with fidelity what brought

brought you hither, and what you have been doing in this foreſt."

Carlo, wild with joy cried out, "*O Santa Maria divino Gieſn!* how happy does this goodneſs make me. Liſten to my hiſtory, *Signor*, it is not long, and complete your benefits by permitting me to attach myſelf *à voſtra fortuna*."

"We will talk of that when you have told me who you are."

"*Italiano Signor—Italiano di Napoli*—walk on *Signor*, and lend your attention to *le povero Carlo Sciocco*."

They ſtruck into a narrow path, which led to the great road, when the *Italian* began his adventures after this manner:

My father—ah! he was a great muſician of Naples, *Maeſter di Capello:* at five and twenty he had the felicity to be a huſband, and my father; ſome time after he had the misfortune to fight one of his own profeſſion, becauſe he ſung worſe than himſelf: unluckily my father, *directed by fate*, excelled him in every thing—his contemptible adverſary was left dead on the field of action—for this noble *rencontre* my father was forced to fly with his family to *Santa Croce*, merely to vegetate, finding it hard to gain a ſubſiſtence where he was not known or reſpected. I was five years old, and deſtined by *fate* to make a diſtinguiſhed artiſt.

After

After the death of my parents, when I was yet young, I fixed myſelf at *Fraſcati*, where I had many ſcholars for muſic and compoſition: beſides, I went to ſing at a number of magnificent palaces, inhabited by perſons of the firſt diſtinction, by whom I was kindly treated: yet for all this I was not happy: my mind was wedded to the charms of melancholy—I loved ſtudy—I deſired to be a philoſopher—calm and ſolitude were the treaſures I longed for, and an opportunity preſented itſelf, which I thought would procure me theſe advantages. It happened by chance, or rather fate, that there lodged in the ſame houſe with me a French gentleman, named the Chevalier Mandeville, who travelling through Italy for improvement, ſtopped at *Fraſcati* to examine that fine *Tuſculum Novum*, built at the foot of a mountain on the ſame land with the *Tuſculum* of the ancients.

With this accompliſhed *Chevalier* I became intimate; he was paſſionately fond of muſic, but more ſo of my ſinging, ſo that we ſpent all our evenings together. I one day took him with me to the houſe of Signor Mazarelli, a noble and opulent man, whoſe daughter, *Signora Laurette Mazarelli*, was one of my beſt ſcholars. My friend, the beau Chevalier, no ſooner beheld, than he fell deſperately in love with

with her, and I had the weakneſs to be corrupted by his preſents, ſo that I promiſed him my aſſiſtance. Laurette entreated to the ſame purpoſe, which made me the leſs reluctant, finding their paſſion to be mutual: in ſhort, *Signor*, I helped them to eſcape, and was the companion of their flight. Ah! *Signor*, *Signor*, it was now that I was to carry my favourite plan of retirement into execution; but hear how it turned out.

Signora Laurette was promiſed by her father to a little rich raſcal, whom ſhe deteſted—but firſt I ſhall tell you by what contrivance I got her from the old Signor's clutches, who cauſed her to be watched by the whole family—it was thus: Laurette, by my inſtigation, pretended indiſpoſition, and did not come out of her chamber. I went to her chamber to give her a leſſon at ſix o'clock, holding a handkerchief to my face, and complaining very much of the tooth ach; I only ſtaid with her half an hour, but returned again, pretending to have left ſome muſic behind me; in a moment we exchanged dreſſes; I laid down on the bed, and ſhe, covered with my veſtments and flowing wig, with a handkerchief to her face, paſſed through the midſt of her women without being ſuſpected [illegible] my part I was in the *trapola*, and how to eſcape I knew not, when one

one of the women came to my bed-ſide aſking if I wanted any thing.

I made no reply, feigning to be drowſy, not *ſono ronfatore ma d'un ſonno dolce étranquilly*—thinking me aſleep ſhe retired, ſhutting the door after her; immediately I new dreſſed myſelf in pantaloons, and a little veſt of brown, which I brought with me for the purpoſe, when in another minute, with the agility of a profeſſed ſweeper, I aſcended the chimney; it was now night; I got down from the top, by the help of ropes to a neighbouring balcony, the door of which was open, from whence I completed my eſcape.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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